

Chess Classics

Python Strategy

Tigran
Petrosian



QUALITY CHESS

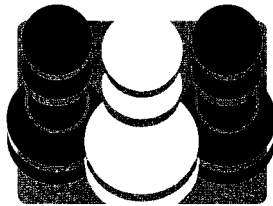


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Python Strategy

By

Tigran Petrosian



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Python Strategy

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Tigran Vartanovich Petrosian

Biographical Data

Born: 17 June 1929, Tbilisi

Educated at V.Y. Briusov Pedagogical Institute, Yerevan

Graduated in philosophical sciences

Editor-in-chief of 64 weekly, 1968-77

Representative of "Spartak" sport club

USSR Master of Sport from 1952

International Master from 1952

USSR Grandmaster and International Grandmaster from 1952

Honoured Master of Sport from 1960

World Champion 1963-9, title successfully defended in 1966

USSR Champion 1959, 1961, 1969, 1975

USSR Junior Champion 1945, 1946

Member of winning team in World Chess Olympiads 1958, 1960, 1962, 1964, 1966, 1968, 1970, 1972, 1974

Member of winning team in European Team Championships 1957, 1961, 1965, 1970, 1973, 1977, 1980, 1983

Holder of "Order of Friendship of Peoples" and "Order of the Badge of Honour" decorations

Awarded medal "For Labour Valour"; holder of Certificates of Merit of RSFSR Supreme Soviet and Armenian SSR Supreme Soviet

Died: 13 August 1984, Moscow

Key to symbols used

±	White is slightly better	?	a weak move
∓	Black is slightly better	??	a blunder
±	White is better	!	a good move
∓	Black is better	!!	an excellent move
+−	White has a decisive advantage	!?	a move worth considering
−+	Black has a decisive advantage	?!	a move of doubtful value
=	equality	#	mate
≡	with compensation		
↗	with counterplay		
⦶	unclear		

Editor's Foreword

Thirty years have passed since the appearance of Tigran Petrosian's book *The Strategy of Soundness*, issued by the "Physical Culture and Sport" publishing house (renamed in this English edition as *Python Strategy*). But the creative heritage of the leaders of world chess is a thing of enduring value, without which the development of the game of the wise would be unthinkable. And so the decision by the "Russian Chess House" publishers to bring out a second edition of the ninth World Champion's book seems wholly natural. The task of editing the book from the standpoint of the elapsed years has been entrusted to me.

I belong to the generation whose essence was expressed figuratively by Mikhail Tal: "We all derive from Botvinnik." The first Soviet World Champion was my idol, and when he lost his match against Petrosian in 1963, it was felt that fortune had rather favoured the challenger. But when Petrosian retained his Champion's title in his match with Spassky, this opened our eyes: no such thing had been achieved by such brilliant predecessors as Smyslov or Tal. Petrosian's further career is staggering: after losing the Championship crown in 1969 he played in four Candidates cycles and five USSR Championships, with stable results on an astonishingly high level: he twice won the Championship of the country (his overall total of gold medals was four), and three times shared prizewinning places. Such consistently high scores had not been attained by anyone else. Only great champions are capable of these things!

I must confess it was only while editing this book that I became acquainted with Petrosian's creative heritage to the proper extent. A different Petrosian appeared before me: not so much the cautious pragmatist nipping his opponent's threats in the bud as a champion of play on the grand scale, who created not only positional but also combinative masterpieces. Concerning the reception of his legacy, I am inclined to agree with Mark Evgenievich Taimanov, whose sporting career overlapped with Petrosian's for decades: "He remained an enigmatic player to the end. He was so original, he cannot be compared to anyone else among the great... He had such a capacity to sense danger in advance – when there was not even a threat, but just faint hints – and he would take immediate measures! Apart from his remarkable intuition, he had phenomenal tactical vision, tremendous imagination." I am convinced that chessplayers wishing to raise the level of their chess culture and competitive results have much to gain from studying Petrosian's games.

In editing the book I have endeavoured not only to preserve the legacy of Tigran Petrosian as collected together by Eduard Shekhtman, and to leave the style unchanged while eliminating some outdated and no longer topical material (from a number of interviews). I have also attempted to fill some gaps in the presentation of Petrosian's competitive career. The main task was to supplement the book with some games of key importance in that career, particularly in the matches with Spassky and Fischer.

Oleg Stetsko, USSR Master of Sport

Compiler's Foreword

In December 1983 Tigran Petrosian finally decided to write a book. He agreed to do so when urged by Viktor Chepizhnoi, the chess director of the “Physical Culture and Sport” publishing house. Chepizhnoi's arguments were convincing, but the Champion already understood perfectly well that the moment had come: he had already collected and classified practically all the games he had ever played (they came to around two thousand). For roughly a quarter of them, annotations had been written, albeit in a compressed (“Informator”-style) arrangement.

For this book Petrosian wanted to annotate roughly 30-40 more games; together with those published earlier, these would constitute the nucleus of the work. But his life took a different turn. Tigran Vartanovich had been feeling unwell for some time. His play was off form, his games showed some strange kinds of errors, some inexplicable blunders. An examination showed that he was incurably ill. His robust frame endured two operations and he returned home. New plans, the desire to play, to write, to work... Up until his final moments he didn't realize he was dying. Word came through that Petrosian had been admitted to the Interzonal Tournament. He asked his wife Rona Yakovlevna to find out where and when it was going to be. He was already back in hospital, his strength was giving out, but he refused to believe he would not get up again.

On Monday 13 August 1984, the ninth World Champion breathed his last.

The book that Tigran Vartanovich would have written might well have been quite different from the one before you. I merely know that he did not want to alter anything in his old annotations, which reflect the spirit of their time. He wished for chronology to be strictly observed...

From the most varied sources it was possible to collect an extensive amount of material, the majority of it written by Petrosian himself. A number of games are annotated by his closest assistants Isaak Boleslavsky and Igor Zaitsev, and also by some other Grandmasters. In what follows, all games are annotated by Petrosian unless otherwise stated at the start of the game.

As a rule, Petrosian's annotations were written “hot on the heels” of the games – for bulletins, special issues, magazines. In preparing this book he didn't want to adapt them to a present-day format. Hence expressions like “the investigations of the past few years” must be taken as relating to the time when the game in question was played. In some cases where the notes to games were incomplete, the compiler or editor introduced some minor corrections, additions or alterations.

The introductory articles were written by people closely acquainted with Petrosian. Grandmasters Nikolai Krogus and Svetozar Gligoric spent many pleasant hours with Tigran Vartanovich; they took part in many chess battles together with him. Nikolai Tarasov was linked to Petrosian by long years of friendship. They both put much effort and energy into reviving the publication of a chess weekly. The first issue of *64* appeared in 1968. Petrosian became its first editor, and Tarasov, a journalist by profession, took charge of the young editorial team.

I am sincerely indebted to Rona Yakovlevna Petrosian, who greatly helped in the collecting of material for this book. I hope this account of the ninth World Champion's contribution to chess will make for interesting reading.

Eduard Shekhtman

The Logic of Talent

Leningrad. The warm, sunny summer of 1946. In the majestic white marble building of the Pioneers' Palace, the second post-war Junior Championship of the USSR was under way.

It was there that I saw Tigran Petrosian for the first time. He was then the only Candidate Master among us, and already the adult Champion of Armenia.

The years quickly passed. Of course, many details from those days have been lost from my memory. But to this day I can clearly see Tigran's candid, good-hearted smile. I also recall both the speed and the precision of his chess thinking, which you immediately felt to be out of the ordinary. On the whole, the human memory retains what is most essential, most important. And so in this case it has retained what already distinguished Tigran in his young years and what characterized him throughout his life: his talent, optimism and benevolence.

His native gifts, hard work and mental energy enabled Petrosian to achieve supreme success. But I think that his name will be preserved for ever in the history of chess not only by reason of his World Championship title and his victories in top-level contests. What is also significant and unique is his creative contribution to the development of chess thought.

Let us recall Petrosian's famous predecessors. Steinitz formulated the fundamental laws of positional play. Lasker demonstrated the significance of a practical approach to chess based on the psychology of competition. Alekhine, the wizard of chess combination, gave us a new understanding of dynamic positions, of the link between tactics and strategic principles. Alekhine, Nimzowitsch and Botvinnik laid the foundations for a scientific approach to studying the theory of chess and the problems of chess training. Botvinnik, for instance, succeeded in demonstrating the potentialities of devising systems of play that united the opening and middlegame in a single strategic plan (the method of obtaining "typical positions").

Petrosian of course leaned on the ideas of Steinitz, Alekhine, Nimzowitsch, Botvinnik and other leading lights of chess. But Petrosian's name is also associated with a qualitatively new stage in the understanding of chess strategy and its laws. He constantly stressed that he valued logic above all else in chess. But this widely held view was reflected in his games in a new way.

In his time he is sure to have paid attention to the fact that the "logicality" of decisions taken by masters contains contradictions and is far from unambiguous. For instance in complicated positions the weight of some particular strategic factor often proves to be highly inconstant. In addition, the level of technique and theoretical knowledge that had built up by the middle of the present century meant that the number of "one-sided" games was reduced to a minimum. These days, a struggle between equal opponents is likely to go through not one but several moments of crisis.

Understanding this, Petrosian endeavoured to show that not only combinations and tactical devices but also the strategy of contemporary chess was dynamic and many-faceted. Many of his games show examples of play where the hierarchy of strategic factors, determining the assessment of the position, undergoes change, and the plans and ideas are transformed. But his games not only make us aware of dynamism as an attribute of modern chess strategy, they also teach us to

anticipate and therefore control this process. In this connection the famous seventh game of the 1966 World Championship match is worth recalling.

I think that this non-formal understanding of chess logic is Petrosian's chief contribution to the development of chess thought.

Commentators quite often noted that above all else Petrosian strove for prophylaxis, for restricting his opponent's activity; and it was only after achieving this (they said) that he would start an offensive of his own. To a certain extent this opinion is just. Petrosian himself stated that the following programme reflected his chess philosophy: "restriction of the opponent's possibilities; a strategy embracing the whole board; encirclement of the enemy king, and the gradual tightening of the ring round it."

I consider that playing to "restrict the opponent's possibilities" by no means contradicts what has already been said about Petrosian's understanding of the logic of the chess struggle. On the contrary, it was precisely on the strength of this understanding that he endeavoured to reduce his opponent's dynamic potential while leaving himself with appreciable freedom of action.

This play for restriction also had its psychological reasons, associated with Tigran's character. It was not a result of timidity, hesitancy or inward passivity. I think the explanation must be sought in Petrosian's distinct and fully conscious system of views, which reflected, first, his extremely responsible attitude to the matter in hand, and secondly, his objectivity in assessing his own possibilities.

The feeling of responsibility that was characteristic of Tigran had probably been formed in his difficult childhood years. Unlike many others of the same age, he never enjoyed the right to "take a move back". Every decision had to be taken once and taken correctly. The sources of his objectivity and self-scrutiny should also evidently be sought in his childhood. Being confronted at an early age with the need to solve the problems of life for himself without hoping for outside help, Tigran no doubt learnt several harsh lessons, and whether he liked it or not, he had to take a critical view of his own deeds. The requirement for self-knowledge, which continued to distinguish Tigran Vartanovich in mature years, will have developed in these circumstances.

If the essence of the psychological struggle in chess can be briefly stated, it consists of the following points. First you must study your opponent to determine his strength and weakness; secondly, through self-analysis, you need to understand your own merits and defects; and finally, you need the ability to compare yourself with your opponent and create situations unpleasant to him and familiar to you. The majority of chessplayers are keen to solve the first problem; the other person's defects are easier to perceive. But what is much more difficult is to assess *yourself* correctly. A characteristic of very many players is that they forget about their own mistakes or put them down to fortuitous circumstances. Petrosian, however, set a rare example by his ability to appraise his own strength and possibilities objectively and without prejudice, and to compare himself with others judiciously.

It is therefore understandable that Petrosian, an extremely self-critical person, nonetheless objected to a number of commentators (especially in the 1950s) who demanded a quick improvement in his competitive results and a change in his style of play. These critics would not or could not understand that the young Grandmaster was consistently progressing and was not by any means devoid of ambition. But at the same time he realistically evaluated his possibilities and knew what boundaries he could reach within a given stretch of time.

Of course, apart from a good knowledge of your possibilities, you need the ability to realize them in practice; and it is precisely here that we must remember Petrosian's celebrated strategy of restriction, which allowed him to eliminate the will of his opponent to a great extent and shape the play according to his own liking.

After the Junior Championship in Leningrad, I often met with Tigran at various chess contests. On one occasion, when I was assisting his opponent in a match, we were "on opposite sides of the barricades". But even at that tense moment his equable and benign attitude did not change.

In the last few years I had the pleasure of getting to know Tigran more closely. I have grateful memories of his cordiality, his sincere generosity, his faithfulness to his word and to his friends. Every meeting with him was interesting. He possessed an inquiring mind and a wide range of interests. But first and foremost of course, Petrosian was and remained a chessplayer.

On 17 June 1984, his 55th birthday, he was already severely ill, but still dreaming of taking part in the match in London between the USSR and the rest of the world. He was talking about the preparation of the book that is now open before the reader. But the life of this great chessplayer was destined to be cut short within less than two months.

Grandmaster Nikolai Krogius

The Man I Knew

Champions usually have a sense of their calling, and this helps them to develop the abilities and strength of will that are indispensable on the road to great achievements.

Tigran Petrosian was an exception. He reached the summit solely on account of his talent, having no other advantages over his rivals. Petrosian was a modest man, which in itself of course is not a failing; and yet modesty is considered the last quality to be characteristic of champions.

While still a schoolboy, Petrosian understood that nothing in life comes for free. He was self-made in the full sense of the term, and succeeded in rising from obscurity to the summit of world chess glory.

Tigran had nothing to boast about except his mental ability, but this is something an intelligent human being will *not* brag about. Even if simplicity and objectivity had not been his innate qualities, they would definitely have been nurtured in him by the deprivations and burdens of the war years that he lived through in his youth.

At times, when he noticed people being vain and pompous, his face would take on the self-assured expression of a man wise enough to understand the whole senselessness of vanity. He enjoyed good-naturedly mocking his over-ambitious colleagues, and his ironic smile told you how amusing they seemed to him.

Petrosian's gift for chess manifested itself in early childhood. But he understood that he could hardly count on a great future while living in the provinces. For that reason, in 1950 he moved to Moscow. There he joined the "Spartak" sport club.

With the years, his heart-felt need to be surrounded by sincere friends was turned into a boundless devotion to his club. It is widely supposed that chessplayers are interested in little else but their chess, like artists who are wholly absorbed in their art. Tigran, however, loved sport in general, he played a good game of table tennis and was an excellent skier. The way he would suffer when his favourite team was defeated, or conversely his loud rejoicing when "Spartak" won, presented a truly arresting spectacle. Petrosian's comical, childlike excitability was a distinctive trait.

Petrosian knew how to love, and he possessed a natural wish to please. Ever since his youth, for instance, he was considered one of the world's strongest "lightning" players. But when he was playing blitz chess you had the feeling that he was interested not so much in the result of the game as in the impression he was making on the spectators. A year before his premature death he was at a tournament in Yugoslavia, and I saw how he organized a short "five minute" match with the young Kasparov during an excursion out of town. Tigran's contagious cheerful laugh and the comments with which he accompanied the play attracted a mass of onlookers, and his witty remarks never ceased to raise outbursts of laughter around the table. It so happened that this trip proved to be Tigran's last...

Nature made an absurd, unforgivable mistake by cutting short his journey so early, seeing that Petrosian was made for a long life and that his entire personal philosophy accorded with this.

He was of a temperate disposition, he avoided over-exertion and never tried to disturb the natural course of events. Frequently coming through tournaments as the sole undefeated participant, he would allow others to take first place. However, while the names of the winners changed over the years, Petrosian would invariably (with very rare exceptions) finish in the prize lists, over the course of three decades. His consistency is striking!

I first met Tigran in 1952 at the Interzonal Tournament in Stockholm. He was 23 years old. At that time he already amazed me with his special ability to prevent his opponent from penetrating his piece formation. Petrosian joined the world chess elite a year later by finishing in the top five in the 1953 Candidates Tournament at Zurich, just “one step” behind the strongest players of that time: Smyslov, Keres, Bronstein and Reshevsky. Together with Bronstein he was the first Soviet Grandmaster to visit Yugoslavia in 1954. Possessing a gift for languages, he soon learned to speak fluent Serbo-Croat.

The range of his interests was vast; he loved talking to people wherever his tournament life took him, and his company was always a pleasure. Petrosian’s charm flowed from his simplicity, as he treated everyone as his equal. People in Montenegro have good memories of his last visits, and when I spend my holidays there, they often tell me about their meetings with Petrosian.

Life treated Tigran with incomprehensible severity. He loved music, he enthused about new developments in radio technology, he acquired a very good stereo system – yet with age his hearing deteriorated, and he was compelled to rely on a hearing aid.

There is a curious story about that gadget, involving me. Once during a tournament game, Petrosian offered me a draw. I had no winning chances, but something made me say “No!” although I regretted it at once. I was on the point of retracting my refusal when I noticed that Tigran had removed the hearing aid from his ear and could no longer hear me. I was forced to continue the game; five moves later I was in a hopeless situation and lost, which in the end cost me a substantial prize.

In spite of the ailments that dogged him, Petrosian always kept in good humour, remaining spirited and cheerful. He came to know happiness in family life; he had a beautiful wife, whose acquaintance I made in Leningrad in 1957. It turned out that she had a good understanding of chess. Rona became Petrosian’s loyal helper in all his affairs. They were inseparable for many a long year, and the warmth of his family, to which Petrosian was very much attached, enabled him to bear the blows of fortune easily.

His quest for calm and tranquillity in life found complete fulfilment in his home surroundings. Rona took upon herself the burden of all the day-to-day cares; the comfort of their flat, and the wonderful environment in their country house not far from Moscow, were the work of her hands. Tigran had nothing to worry about and could devote himself fully to his chess. At home he would read, write, study chess, listen to music, cultivate flowers, play with his sons, his dogs and his cats. Tigran and Rona knew how to receive guests and liked doing so. Whenever I came to Moscow they would not forget to invite me to their home, and they would always try to make me feel comfortable while a long way from my own country.

Petrosian’s open and sincere character was as charming as his unique style of play. He would usually play quickly, finding the best moves with ease; he was an unsurpassed master of manoeuvre, and in his youth he already acquired the nickname of “boa constrictor” for his knack of gradually “strangling” his opponent’s position. I remember he impressed me with his win against Bisguier in 1954, when against all the “rules” he left his king in the centre throughout the game (something

that would never have entered my head if I had been in his place!) and kept gaining space in a leisurely manner until his opponent resigned.

Attaching an important meaning to the time factor in chess, Petrosian worked out his own system against the popular Tartakower Variation. After 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 ♗e7 5.♗g5 h6, his continuation was 6.♗xf6 (instead of the usual 6.♗h4 b6) 6...♗xf6 7.e3, enabling White to save time and exert strong pressure on Black's central outposts.

But Petrosian's unique understanding of chess went far beyond the bounds of conventional thinking. In the Queen's Indian Defence, after 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6, his contribution was in contrast to the line just mentioned; here he suggested a solution that was *wasteful* in terms of time, namely 4.a3(!), granting his opponent an important tempo to develop his bishop with 4...♗b7. What could be the meaning of this? The answer is that White now plays 5.♘c3 and threatens to seize space in the centre with d4-d5, condemning the nimble bishop to inactivity. Black is therefore forced to join battle in the centre early, by replying 5...d5, but then after 6.cxd5 he is faced with an unpleasant dilemma: whether to block the bishop he has just developed by retaking on d5 with the pawn, or to reply 6...♘xd5 which weakens his central position. Petrosian's ingenious idea gained recognition in Grandmaster practice!

Possessing a deep understanding of the principles of chess, Petrosian at the same time possessed breadth of vision and was free from any prejudices. He did not cling blindly (say) to Lasker's principle which states that knights should be the first pieces developed; in the Orthodox Defence for instance, after 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3, he proposed a particular order of moves: 3...♗e7! and only then 4...♘f6, thus avoiding the unwelcome exchange that is possible after an immediate 3...♘f6 (4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5).

Petrosian was renowned for his sense of danger, his ability to take prophylactic measures in good time – which is why his losses were exceedingly rare. He was still only young when he took part in five successive Championships of the USSR, coming through four of them without a single defeat! Gaining the title of Soviet Champion just once is incredibly difficult, but Petrosian achieved it four times – in 1959, 1961, 1969 and 1975.

But Petrosian was by no means as placid and composed as he appeared on the outside. From the ten Olympiads in which he took part, he amassed an unprecedented score: 79 wins, 50 draws and one solitary loss! His temperament revealed itself to the full extent when, as I was told, he almost threw the chess clock off the table in a fit of temper after that one defeat, at Huebner's hands...

Petrosian's wisdom and his aversion for unjustified risk in chess were often misunderstood; he was reproached with excessive caution. But the point is that he had a much deeper understanding of chess than many of his critics, and his objectivity prevented him from overestimating his own chances. His collection of beautiful games and unique combinations is the best answer to all the accusations.

To tell the truth, in Petrosian you noticed a patent disparity between his immense chess talent and his absence of ambition. When his hour struck at Curacao in 1962, Petrosian was leading the Candidates Tournament and agreed a quick draw in the last round, putting his trust in fate. And fate rewarded him: his sole rival, Keres, got flustered, lost his composure, and suffered a defeat.

Petrosian was obviously surprised at the rare opportunity afforded to him to do battle with Botvinnik. In the very first game of the World Championship match, in reverential dread of his illustrious opponent, he went down to defeat with the white pieces on account of his passive play. However strange it may seem, this defeat and the sequence of draws that followed helped Petrosian

to regain confidence in his own powers. In the 22 games of the match, Botvinnik managed to score only one more win! Petrosian emerged as victor from this titanic struggle, having found a convincing way to neutralize the World Champion's profound strategy and aggressive style of play. Afterwards Botvinnik once admitted to me that in this match, for the first time, he had been "unable to fathom the motives of the challenger's play".

For all his circumspection, Petrosian would quite often "contradict" himself by taking decisions that amazed you by their beauty, even in the most crucial games. I shall never forget his first win against Botvinnik, with the original king march across the whole board. Petrosian's games are literally replete with such elegant solutions.

After his first match with Petrosian, Spassky once confessed to me: "You know, Gligo, Tigran is above all else a stunning tactician." To be sure, Petrosian's reputation as a dry positional player has become firmly established, and yet in his match with Spassky alone he sacrificed material nine times!

Understandably, this happened in complicated situations where Petrosian was obliged to take extreme measures. Two of these games are particularly impressive: the seventh, where his strategy of "strangulation" issued in a mating attack, and the other in which he achieved victory by a spectacular sacrifice of his queen on the empty square in the corner of the board.

Petrosian the player is not easy to characterize in a couple of words, as his talent was uncommon in its many-sidedness. Chess held no secrets for him, which is why Tigran called himself a positional player and esteemed precisely this quality in himself. Yet at the same time he was always ready to deal unexpected blows, as soon as he felt that strategically his position was ripe for combinative solutions.

It might seem that Petrosian became World Champion virtually against his will. Having gained this highest of titles, he continued to behave as though nothing had happened, playing in tournaments that were ill-suited to sustain what we would call a champion's prestige. One day Petrosian said to me, with his characteristic irony: "Sooner or later I'll lose the title of Champion, but then I'll *never* part with the title of ex-Champion!"

Petrosian was destined to retain his title as the world's strongest chessplayer for six years. But for many years afterwards, he still continued to take part in contests of the highest calibre. He played in Candidates matches. Only a year before his premature death, he was unsuccessful in the Interzonal Tournament at Las Palmas. In that last spring at his country residence, his neighbour was Vasily Smyslov. Seeing Tigran at work in his garden plot, Smyslov praised him for his knowledge of horticulture; he himself took little interest in such things, and was therefore unable to savour the delights of life in the country the way that Petrosian did.

In Petrosian's reply, there was an unexpected trace of sadness: "Yes, but you *are* going to go to the Candidates matches..." It was clear to everyone that although the well-being in his family home made Petrosian happy, chess remained an inalienable part of his life until the very last day...

Grandmaster Svetozar Gligoric

A Journey Across the Street

Childhood... It is by no means always serene and easy. Especially in wartime. The childhood of the ninth World Champion, Tigran Petrosian, was very hard, but it was these very years that in many ways determined his fate.

He only needed to go out of the house, run across the road and hurl himself into the shadow of the theatre entrance, where his own future was standing behind every column. But he and his future were unknown to each other. No one is familiar with the future, especially their own. You can at least guess at other people's future, but your own is always under seven seals.

"Once upon a time..."

Little Tigran can hear the guttural voice of "Babo", his old aunt, who came into their house in the harsh days when he lost his brother and his mother died. This aunt survived his father and has become the sole support of the family that fell apart under the blows of wartime.

It is long past the time for the thin boy with the large eyes to go to sleep, but he stares through those round black eyes into the darkness and indulges in fantasies.

The country of his childhood was Rustaveli Avenue. Or more exactly, it was one side of it – the side on your left as you look from Lenin Square towards the poet's memorial. On this side there is the Officers' Club, where Tigran's family lived in the caretaker's room; there is the Pioneers' Palace, where he played chess; and there is the chess club, where he was also sometimes allowed to move the pieces around – the heavy pieces, loaded with lead – until the adults arrived.

Everything that happened afterwards happened on this main street of the city, first on its left side and then on its right side. At the chess club, the son of old Vartan the caretaker would become Champion of Tbilisi and a Candidate Master. On the stage of the Rustaveli Theatre, Grandmaster Tigran Petrosian, the future World Chess Champion, would become Champion of the USSR for the first time.

A journey across the street... but how much time this crossing would take!

Back to the Beginning

Viewed from the courtyard, a house in Tbilisi exhibits the eternal communal life of the South, where the wheels of upended bicycles protrude from under white sheets hung out to dry like flags, while on the iron balconies and iron stairways women bath their babies and men play backgammon. But the yard where Tigran's childhood was spent was different. This was the courtyard of an institution, where from the morning all was quiet, but in the evening, music blared forth from the windows, fading away in the yard's deserted far end.

One day was like another. And yet each one contained something of its own, so that the close of any day brought the feeling of something irrevocable, something lost for ever.

Playing at backgammon, Turkish draughts and other board games of the Orient, young Tigran impressed the adults with his boldness and resourcefulness. Nothing gave his father more pleasure than watching his son win games.

It is said that the genius Capablanca learnt to play chess by watching others play. Petrosian was not able to do this. He looked at the chessboard for hours, but the laws of this game remained incomprehensible to him. And then came the day when a boy his own age opened up the world of chess to Tigran; he showed him how the pieces move, and explained the sense and purpose of their movements. And backgammon was forgotten. Turkish draughts too was discarded. Even football, on which all boys in Tbilisi bestowed their love, now seemed to be something not very important, not so essential.

Queuing for a Chess Set

His mother is still alive, and his brother has not yet been taken away to the army. His father scolds Tigran's sister Vartush for lethargy or restlessness (both, in their family, call for reproof), while Tigran smiles once again at his own cunning: in the night, once again, he has moved the hands of the grandfather clock forward by one hour.

He can set off for school.

The classroom is empty. Once again he is the first there. And for the next half hour, no one will be calling his name out, no one will stop him from playing the game in which the world, so to speak, is newly created according to laws that are known only to him, Tigran; a world in which he is just as much an adult as Archil Ebralidze, the chess master and teacher from the Pioneers' Palace.

Today, Tigran's opponent is the former World Chess Champion, Jose Raul Capablanca. He is still handsome and young, and he has come to Tbilisi at Tigran's invitation. Tigran answers the queen's pawn opening by playing the variation of the Armenian Defence that bears his name. The celebrated Cuban is disconcerted. And no wonder! This variation isn't even in that famous book that has been translated into Armenian – Maizelis's chess primer!

What now? It is quiet. The clock in the school entrance hall can be heard ticking. Then Capablanca is saved by the bell. Tigran's classmates burst into the room. The world of fantasy has collapsed. Lessons will shortly begin.

After school, Tigran goes home alone. Again he is immersed in his secret world. Arrangements have to be made for continuing his match with Capablanca. The Cuban isn't very accommodating, but seeing that tomorrow is Sunday – a difficult day for Tigran – he consents to resume on Monday.

But why is Sunday, everyone's holiday, a difficult day for Tigran and his brother?

Tomorrow, for the last time, they are going to get up at four in the morning, shivering from the cold; they are going to open the door cautiously and then run to the grocery store on the corner. There will be plenty of people there already. But the boys have no need to be first. Everyone huddling in the street at this early hour, in front of the closed doors of the shop, thinks that this is a queue for meat, but for Tigran and Amayak (that is his brother's name) it is a queue for... a chess set. At seven in the morning they will sell their "turn" in the queue to grown-up strange women for two roubles, and in their secret children's money-box the necessary sum will finally come together to realize their long-standing dream. In the afternoon they will both condemn their own action and swear to each other that they will never again engage in speculation (a word often pronounced angrily and disparagingly by their father). Then they will take 31 roubles to the sports shop and buy a chess set – a large genuine set with a wooden board and heavy lathe-turned pieces.

But just now it is Saturday. They are in the fifth month of the first year of the war. Tigran is twelve years old. At the Pioneers' Palace they love him. He loves chess. And chess responds in kind.

The Pioneers' Palace

In the Pioneers' Palace, the chess club was a kind of state within a state. It had its subjects and its laws. It also had its president...

Many years on, in Moscow, after the 22nd game of his match for the World Championship, the as yet uncrowned Champion would set eyes on him in the foyer of the Estrada Theatre; he would go up to him with a smile, and while laughing off the congratulations on his own victory, he would congratulate the other man on receiving the Lenin prize – for outstanding achievements in the field of science and technology. At the moment, though, this curly-haired boy, an evacuee from Kharkov, is not even fifteen years old. His name is Vitya Bravinsky. He is cheerful and carefree.

Banging the pieces down on the board and straight away pressing his clock, Bravinsky is playing blitz chess (five minutes per game), and the future chess king loses to him. True, neither of them realizes this. And it seems to Tigran that he will never learn to play better than Bravinsky.

Here among the youngsters, but buried in his books and notes, and seemingly separated from everyone by an invisible wall, Archil Ebralidze is preparing for a big tournament. His aquiline profile is sharply outlined against the background of a large demonstration board. But he is not demonstrating anything. The children don't disturb him, and he doesn't disturb them either...

Ebralidze has his own way of working with children. As much independence as possible. If something isn't clear, then ask – or better still, have a think about it yourself. Sometimes, to be sure, he will move the chessboard aside and talk with passion about the great masters of the past, the Grandmasters, the virtuosi; he will talk about the battle of ideas in chess, that strange artificial world created by the human will and incorporating something of sport, something of art, something of science – and something, quite simply, of life itself with its laws that remain far from familiar.

Archil Ebralidze takes a liking to many of his pupils. But he has no illusions about Bravinsky's successes. This boy takes everything too lightly. You feel that his main interest lies somewhere outside the bounds of these 64 squares; you feel that he is merely giving his brain some exercise, and that the pleasure he takes in the game has less to do with the mind than with the muscles, like the pleasure of football or athletics. With Tigran it goes deeper. There is something in him. He is thoughtful and not to be hurried. He is the son of a caretaker, but if he didn't have that threadbare jacket and those grey flannel trousers, you could take him for the son of a lawyer or doctor. He speaks Russian badly but forms the endings of the words with diffident precision, and sometimes he constructs a sentence over-correctly like something out of a textbook. And he plays like that: quickly but not rashly. His mistakes don't come out of the blue, they are connected with a faulty plan. Nevertheless Ebralidze considers Shurik Busalev to be the most capable of all. He is ingenious and resourceful. Ebralidze bestows his main attention on him.

Meeting Tigran in Tbilisi fifteen years later, his old teacher will say some rather embarrassed words to him:

"Do forgive me. I didn't guess right away what your future was going to be. There were others who were more noticeable, bolder, more confident..."

And Grandmaster Petrosian will change the subject – he will smile and express his gratitude. But he will not place Ebralidze beyond reproach and will not say to him what he will say to me (after his teacher is dead) in his Moscow apartment, sitting at a chess table made for him by his Yerevan fans in honour of his victory over Botvinnik...

The war is in its second year. Ebralidze is not yet old. He still plays in tournaments and is still in charge of the club at the Pioneers' Palace. And before his eyes, Vitya Bravinsky beats Petrosian. In one tournament, the players competing alongside Tigran, albeit less successfully, include Melor Sturua, now a well-known journalist; Vigen Arutyunian, later to be director of a factory in Yerevan; Misha Paichadze, a cousin of the famous Georgian footballer; and many other Tbilisi schoolboys of that time, which they will remember as the time of their childhood and in which they will see more good things than bad.

But life never smiles on everyone. And in those years it smiled even more rarely and even more selectively.

Three Blows

The war was in its second year. The Red Army was retreating. Hitler's forces were breaking into the Caucasus. The hot breath of the battles was becoming more and more palpable in Tbilisi as elsewhere.

Tigran's brother was drafted into the army. When he sent his second letter he was already at the front, and his third letter never arrived. A year and a half later, at Avlabari market, someone told his mother he had witnessed her son's end.

It turned out that Tigran's brother was alive, but his mother didn't know it; her grief killed her. It is said that woes never come singly. In the autumn, Tigran fell seriously ill. He had to stay away from school. And the ground began to shake beneath his feet.

Perhaps ever since that difficult time, the man who has now reached the summits of life has been unable to endure chance occurrences – he has been averse to unstable situations.

It is hard to say what the boy's fate would have been in those days, if old Vartan's sister had not come to his aid. It is thanks to her above all that Tigran is alive today.

Tigran called his aunt "Babo" (Grandma). But she was not simply a grandmother to him. She replaced his mother. To wrest the boy from the clutches of his illness and set him on his feet as soon as possible, she gave Tigran all her own bread ration. For herself, she climbed up the slope of Mount Mtatsminda with her last remaining strength, gathered some herbs that were known only to her, and cooked a broth with them to preserve her own life which she devoted entirely to others.

The boy recovered. He went back to school. He started playing chess again.

Nimzowitsch for Lunch

Tigran's father was over sixty. But he was hale and hearty.

Each morning his father gave Tigran a rouble for his school lunch, then went to work. Tigran took the rouble, but he didn't have lunch every day. When he and his brother had bought their chess set, they had promised never again to resort to dubious means to acquire money. But now money was needed again – for books: collections of chess games, books of instruction...

Tigran already knew Maizelis by heart. At that time there were no other chess books in the Armenian language. And Russian books were expensive. Refusing his hot bread roll with tea, Tigran would joke: “Today I’m having Nimzowitsch for lunch.”

Aron Nimzowitsch’s *Chess Praxis* was the cornerstone of the foundations on which the chess preparation of the future World Champion was built. Repeating Nimzowitsch’s words but speaking them as if they were his own, Tigran would announce to the family with enthusiasm and delight:

“To me a ‘passed pawn’ is not simply a pawn but, so to speak, a living, rational being with its unexpressed desires, hopes and doubts...”

Old Vartan would get angry:

“You’ve quite gone off your head, lad. Chess isn’t going to do you any good!”

Babo calmed him:

“The boy’s doing well at school. Let him play if he likes.”

And Tigran played. Fervently, insatiably.

Having attained the norm for the fourth category in the very first junior tournament in which he took part, young Petrosian scored points in a few more novices’ contests of this type, simply for fun. In three tournaments at least, he happened to prove his right to second category status. But the first category was not even to be spoken of: “You’re still only fifteen! Why are you in such a hurry?”

He himself couldn’t answer this question. He simply wanted to play. As much as possible. And with the strongest opponents.

King in Check

His father was taken ill. He was still fighting for his life, but his strength was deserting him.

Tigran carried on his studies at school with the same diligence. They also saw him at the Pioneers’ Palace chess club. He frequented the city chess club too. But on top of it all he now had to work. Together with Babo he swept the streets and performed the other difficult duties of a caretaker in a building where hundreds of people came every day, and where the noisy club life was complicated by the special wartime requirements. The officers, posted to the rear or serving in the reserve, were in no hurry to disperse to their quarters. They smoked a lot and would not always leave the cigarette ends in the ash-trays. In winter things were harder still...

It so happened that in those days when his father had taken to his bed, the fifteen-year-old Tigran was finally admitted to a first-category tournament, after a long period of arguments and doubts.

The student from the eighth class in the 73rd Armenian secondary school saw his name on the score chart of a major city tournament for the first time, and it was not without excitement that he started play.

The Georgian Championship Qualification Tournament – such was its official name – was distinguished by a very strong list of contestants. It could be said that this was Tigran’s first great examination. His test of chess maturity.

Petrosian had already scored his first points and joined the group of leaders when the well-known master Vladas Mikenas said to him after one of his wins:

“It all depends on you. If you go about your chess in the right way, you’ll be a master in two years’ time.”

Tigran played easily, confidently, strongly.

All was going well. At home too, it began to appear that everything was about to come right. But the tournament was still only approaching its half-way stage when Petrosian, in play at the time, was informed that his father had died.

There was a complicated position on the board. Tigran’s king was in check, but he picked up a different piece.

Tigran lost that game. He missed two other rounds. He pondered what to do next. What would the neighbours say, if his father had just died and he was playing chess? But then, didn’t they know how much he had loved his father? Did they understand what chess meant to him now?

Ever since he had moved a pawn two squares forward for the first time, chess had become part of his life. His school and his family were another part. Now all that remained of the family was Babo and himself.

Tigran decided to continue the struggle.

Nothing Accidental

Arriving at the club a few days after his father’s death, Petrosian took his place at the table and looked as though nothing had happened.

His move had been sealed. He now carried it out on the board. He started the clock.

For Petrosian, Tbilisi Chess Club became the temple where he received the constant “communion” of high chess art. It was a temple in the literal as well as the figurative sense: the building of a half-ruined church had been repaired and adapted for service to the goddess of chess.

In this temple Archil Ebraliidze, a player with a strict positional style, was Petrosian’s first mentor. He had singled him out from the midst of the pupils his age. He taught Tigran to understand the beauty of logic, he introduced him to the ideas of Nimzowitsch and to Capablanca’s virtuoso technique.

In the same place, little Petrosian met admirers of Alexander Alekhine. The young David Bronstein, who was resident in Tbilisi in those years, gave Tigran a glimpse into the bewildering maelstrom of combinations.

“An idea has to be fetched from where it is,” Ebraliidze said. But Bronstein disagreed: “This idea was not in the position, but I invented it and made it work for me.”

Bronstein disagreed and he won. But what was Petrosian’s attitude to their dispute?

Tigran was full of admiration for Bronstein’s play – the flights of imagination, the brilliance of the combinations. But he continued to believe Ebraliidze, Nimzowitsch and Capablanca.

In among these grand names that the whole world knows, the name of a Georgian master that almost everyone has forgotten cuts a strange figure to be sure. But it is the name of a teacher. And the duty and right of a pupil is to cast on his teacher the light of his own worldwide renown.

“Nothing accidental!” was what Ebraliidze taught the future World Champion. The only good game was one where everything was logical, where each opponent at every stage found and played the best move, and where the winner was he who saw and calculated further.

Snow and Sleep

The war was nearing its end. This could be felt in everything. For one thing, at the city chess club, after a long interval, the Championship of Georgia was taking place. Among the participants was the first-category player Petrosian.

But the winter of 1944 in Tbilisi was unusual. Snow was falling. The branches of the plane trees in Rustaveli Avenue were bending under the weight of their hoods of snow. Along the pavements, snow-drifts were building up.

The snow brought no joy to Tigran. He would call in at home after school to take a light snack and do his homework. Then before going to the club for the next round, he would pick up a shovel and go with the other caretakers to clear away the snow where it caused blockages.

The tournament was a difficult one. It was necessary to prepare for the games. There was not enough time. And the snowy winter that the South had not expected did even more to spoil things for Petrosian. Even after a win, he had to forgo the customary pleasure of playing through the game again and looking at the rejected variations – the ones he had avoided for fear of disturbing the logical interconnection of the moves and prematurely shaking the skilfully created balance.

After the end of a round, Tigran would quickly put the pieces back, fill in the result on the tournament table and hurry home.

Midnight. Turning up the collar of the coat he has long since outgrown, a thin and weary Tigran runs along the snow-covered avenue. The snow falls unrelentingly. But the light snowflakes that swirl so prettily in the light of the street lamps arouse no feeling in Tigran other than bitterness and vexation. In two or three hours he will be woken up again, he will take his shovel – the only implement for fighting against the snowy element – and he will be clearing the pavement of its damp and clinging white shroud.

* * *

When does childhood end? Who can answer this question?

You have obtained your school-leaving certificate. You have started work. Or you have gone on to higher education. But your childhood is not over. It has stretched out its threads into your life of the present, and drawing you into the circle of its images and attractions, it continues still. In it lies the secret of youth.

Both the joy of discovery and the feeling of marvel at things you have done are characteristics of childhood. The years can sharpen or erode them. But as long as they are there, you are young. Childhood is with you, and old age has not yet arrived.

Petrosian became an adult much earlier than most people of his age. At fifteen he had taken work and responsibility upon his weak shoulders. But fate had presented him with a treasured gift: chess. It drew him into a lively and never ageing world of struggle, of victories and defeats. And childhood remained with Tigran for ever...

The journey across the street proved to be a journey across years.

Chapter 1

1945-1948

Tigran Petrosian recalls:

“In the summer of 1941, I was at a Pioneers’ camp. I spent whole days in the open air, running about and playing various games. And it was there that I learned to play chess. Some boy was my first teacher. I had wanted to get to know the game for a long time, and now at last my wish was fulfilled. However, this introduction to chess didn’t spur me to make any special effort to master the secrets of the game when the camp was over and I went home. And it was a daunting time – the war had begun.

“I remember that in that year the Tbilisi Palace of Pioneers and Pre-Pioneers was opened. I went there one day on an outing. We were shown around the Palace with its many rooms, in which anyone could take part in the activity that interested them. That was when I entered room 41 for the first time. It was the children’s chess club. The children were listening to explanations from their instructor, and some of them were writing them down. At that time it was N.T. Sorokin, Candidate Master, who was in charge of the club. I decided to join it. Within the space of a year (from August 1941 to the summer of 1942) I gradually managed to raise my ranking from the fifth to the second category, and became one of the strongest players in the Palace.

“But the main thing was that the wish to make a deep study of this fascinating game had been awakened in me.

“The first serious work on chess with which I familiarized myself was Aron Nimzowitsch’s *Chess Praxis*. I analysed the games and positions from that book innumerable times, and was very fond of reading it without using a chess set; small wonder that in the end I was able to recite it by heart.

“There are such things as special exercises for developing the technique of calculation, but at the time all that was a secret to me. In mature years I have had no particular cause to complain about poor calculation of variations, and what helped me to calculate properly was my habit of reading chess books without looking at a board; I would of course try to follow the process of the struggle from one diagram to the next. *[Compiler’s note: The following lines occur in Petrosian’s rough draft: “A chessplayer ought to be learning not only in moments of study but also during play, in post-mortem analysis, or when browsing through books and magazines. If a problem or study arouses your interest, then go ahead and practise your calculation on it. Or say you come across a diagram accompanied by an assessment of the position, and perhaps you don’t agree with it – then set the position up, examine it, seek advice about it.”]*

“At the age of 13-15 I played a lot of blindfold chess. My usual opponent was Vitya Bravinsky, the long-standing champion of the Pioneers’ Palace. Vitya had been evacuated from Kharkov to Tbilisi in the terrible year of 1941. When we first became friends we were in the fourth category,

but he very quickly outdistanced all his comrades and became, literally, the chess king of our club. Unfortunately Bravinsky later gave the game up.

"It is always with great pleasure that I recall the relatively small but friendly chess club of the Tbilisi Palace of Pioneers. Round about the end of 1941, Archil Silovanovich Ebralidze became our club's instructor. A man of rare affability and kindness, Ebralidze was a master with a high degree of chess culture. He was wholeheartedly devoted to chess, he personally put in a great deal of work on it, he encouraged the interest we had begun to take in the secrets of the game.

"It was not the 'official' activities but the friendly conversations outside the teaching sessions that were of particular use to us. Our tutor carted his very extensive chess library into the Palace, and he would often engage in analysing various positions. Ebralidze not only allowed us to follow his work, he also insisted we should ask him about everything that interested us.

"Ebralidze was an advocate of positional play, he believed in the inviolability of the basic strategic laws and could spend hours looking for the refutation of some attack or combination if the position, in his view, was not such as to permit of a 'violent' solution.

"But if a player let his advantages slip through hesitating when there *were* substantial preconditions for forcing events, Archil Silovanovich would be absolutely convinced that there must have been a tactical solution in the position. In arguments with other masters, he would zealously round on anyone who was violating the fundamental principles of chess strategy. A look of disgust would sometimes come over his face if he detected a patently 'antipositional' attitude.

"I will also add that Ebralidze was a great admirer of Nimzowitsch, Capablanca and... the Caro-Kann Defence.

"I gradually read through a large quantity of chess books and decided who my favourite players were: Capablanca, Nimzowitsch, Lasker. The books I studied most often were Capablanca's *Primer of Chess*, Réti's *Modern Ideas in Chess* and Nimzowitsch's *Chess Praxis*. And by November 1945, that is after four and a half years of working at it, I had transformed myself from a boy unknown to anyone, into a Candidate Master who had repeatedly won tournaments at city level and Georgian state level. I had twice been victorious in all-union junior tournaments.

"I once happened to rummage through the old notebooks and papers where the games of my youth were recorded. The games of a player in mature years, in the period when he makes his appearance in the national arena, find a more or less broad response in the chess press. But little or virtually nothing is known of the games played by our top players in their formative period. And yet these are the very games that allow us to trace the path that some particular master has travelled. They are the material that enables us to study the formation of a chess character.

"In this context I would like to point out that it is wrong to regard young people aged 16-18 as a kind of raw material that you can mould into whatever you like. I think that at that age a chessplayer ought already to possess a distinct philosophy. It is not a question of 'pushing' infant prodigies. No. But life has convincingly shown that all chessplayers who achieve worldwide fame have already been very strong players at the age of 16-18 years.

"The two games given below, played in the years of my youth, show that I had mastered the basic laws of chess strategy fairly well at an early age. The lessons learnt in the Pioneers' Palace proved very useful."

GAME 1

Tigran Petrosian – Nikolay Sorokin

Tbilisi 1945

1.c4 ♖f6 2.♖c3 c6 3.d4 d5 4.cxd5

Ebralidze was a great adherent of this Exchange Variation. It isn't surprising that I followed in his footsteps.

4...cxd5 5.♖f3 ♖c6 6.♗f4 ♗f5 7.e3 ♖b6

All according to the best paradigms of 1945 theory. Sorokin may have wanted to test whether I was familiar with the following novelties.

8.a3!

In the game Makogonov – Ravinsky, USSR 1944, the master from Baku had employed 8.a3 as an innovation and won the game in splendid style; it was awarded a special prize. I recalled this variation: 8...♖xb2 9.♖a4 ♖c2 10.♖xc2 ♗xc2 11.♖c5, and exploiting the fact that 11...b6 fails to 12.♗b5, White obtains powerful pressure on the queenside.

8...e6 9.♗d3

The children in our club had firmly absorbed the principle that with this kind of pawn formation, an exchange of light-squared bishops is in Black's favour. A short essay on this topic, under Ebralidze's auspices, was written by A. Busalev who later became a master.

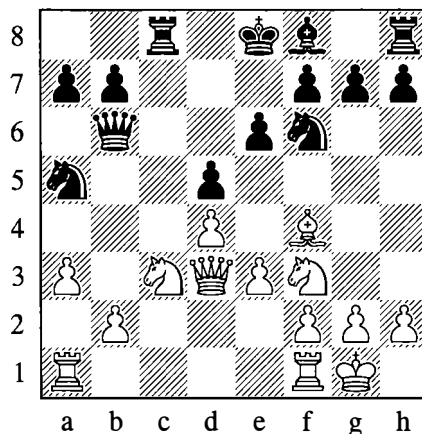
I was hoping to take advantage of the black queen's position on b6 to establish a pawn on b4 and then bring my knight to a4, gaining the initiative on the queenside.

9...♗xd3 10.♖xd3 ♖c8 11.0-0 ♖a5

Now the plan of b2-b4 and ♖a4 is not all that dangerous to Black, since his own knight will land on c4. Nonetheless Black's scheme

has a major defect: he has "shelved" the task of developing his kingside pieces and castling.

At that time I had already mastered one of the important laws of chess strategy: if one side has fallen behind in development, the game must be opened up to punish the offender.



12.e4

I well recall how satisfied I was to discover that 12...♖xb2 could be answered by 13.♗d2, with dangerous threats.

12...dxe4 13.♖xe4 ♖d5 14.♗g3 ♖b3 15.♖d2

After an exchange of queens, all the defects of Black's position would cease forthwith to play any significant role, while at the same time other factors would gain in importance; specifically, the light squares would become good outposts and springboards for the black pieces.

15...♖c4 16.♖g5

The temperature of the struggle rises. Black has clearly gained the upper hand in the queenside battle, but there are other zones of combat – the centre and kingside – where his affairs are in a poor shape.

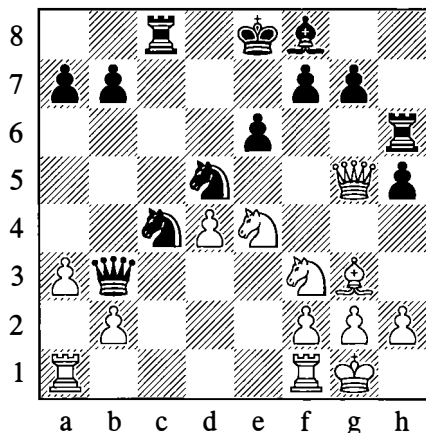
Of course there are no forced variations leading to a win, but it cannot be doubted that the overall assessment of the position is in White's favour. This can be borne out by a

fairly simple appraisal of the players' tactical possibilities. For example if 16...♖xb2, one strong answer is 17.♖fb1, when the pin against the knight on b2 is added to all Black's other troubles.

If Black tries giving his king a loophole with 16...f6, then after 17.♖g4 White already has a concrete target – the e6-pawn. Would you then play 17...♗f7, when White has 18.♖fg5† in reply?

16...h6 17.♖g4 h5 18.♖g5 ♖h6

Black has covered the g6-square and is preparing ...f7-f6, in order afterwards to attend to the queenside in earnest



19.♖ae1

This simple move, bringing one more piece into the battle, demonstrates that Black is in a bad way. A threat of 20.♖xd5 exd5 21.♖f6† ♖d8 22.♖e8# has arisen, and on 19...f6 White decides the game with 20.♖xd5 exd5 21.♖c5† and 22.♖xb3.

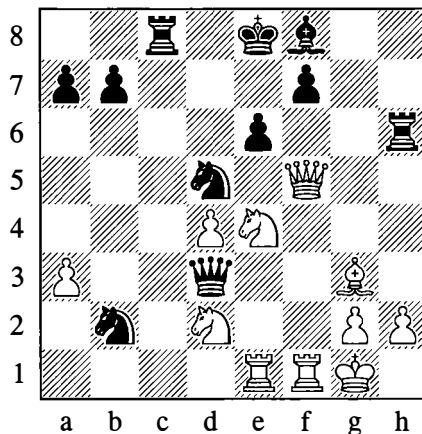
19...♖xb2 20.♖fd2 ♖b5 21.f4

The pawn plays the role of a battering ram which will knock down the flimsy fortifications in the way of White's major pieces.

21...♖g6 22.♖xh5 ♖h6 23.♖f3 ♖d3 24.♖f2 g6

This merely aids White's attack; 24...f5 was more tenacious.

25.f5 gxf5 26.♖xf5



A picturesque position. White's centralized army has developed maximum energy.

26...♖xd4† 27.♖h1 ♖e7

The pawn on f7 is indefensible. On 27...♖g7, White has the decisive stroke 28.♖xd5. The curtain could already be drawn at this point.

28.♖xf7† ♖d7 29.♖f3 ♖h8 30.♖e5 ♖h7 31.♖xh7 ♖xh7 32.♖xb2 ♖c2 33.♖d4 ♖xa3 34.♖e5† ♖d8 35.♖g5 ♖h5 36.♖xe6† ♖e7 37.♖g6† ♖d6 38.♖g4 ♖xf4 39.♖xf4

Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 2

Vladimir Dunaev – Tigran Petrosian

Leningrad 1946

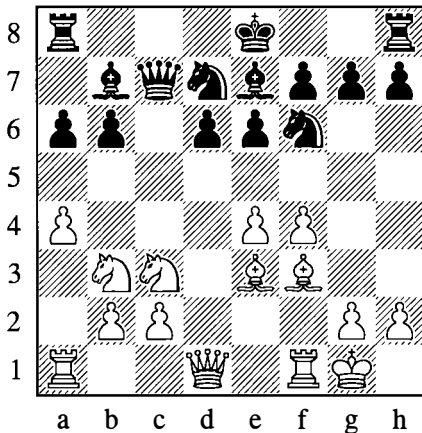
1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♖xd4 ♖f6 5.♖c3 e6 6.♖e2 a6 7.a4 ♖e7

Of course, from the viewpoint of "theoretically correct" opening play, objections can be raised against both opponents' handling

of this line. Specifically we should note that at present a sceptical view is taken of a2-a4, which weakens the b4-square, especially if Black is able to develop his knight on c6. Yet this judgement is constantly subject to change.

If this game had been played 15 years later, it would most likely have gone as follows: 7...♖c6 8.♗b3 (intending 9.a5) 8...♗a5.

8.♗e3 ♖c7 9.♗b3 b6 10.f4 ♗b7 11.♗f3 ♗bd7 12.0-0



12...♗c8

If Black had foreseen the following events, he would have played 12...♗b8. White cannot do without advancing his g-pawn, and in consequence Black will have to play ...♗c5, freeing d7 for the other knight. To meet the attack on the e4-pawn, and with the assurance that ...d6-d5 will not be playable, it is highly likely that White will exchange on c5, leading to closure of the c-file.

This analysis would have prompted Black to ensure that his rook was “in the right place”, not formally but in substance.

13.g4 ♗c5 14.♗xc5 bxc5 15.g5 ♗d7 16.a5

White appears to have had no clear conception of the attacking possibilities that the advance of his pawn mass has opened up

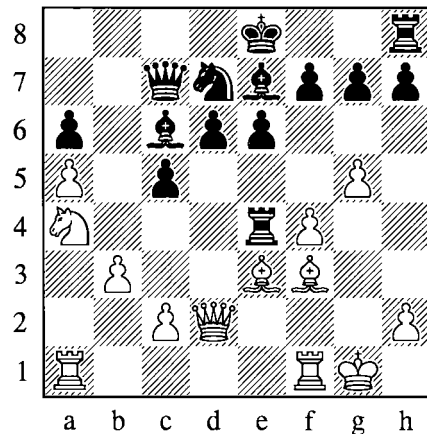
for him. If he didn't like 16.f5 on account of 16...♗e5, he could have thought about 16.♗g4.

16...♗b8 17.♖d2 ♗c6 18.♗a4 ♗b4

We were obviously both in agreement in judging that 18...♗xa4 19.♗xa4 ♗xb2 20.♖c3, followed by 21.♖xg7, would be in White's favour.

19.b3 ♗xe4

If you compare the positions resulting from 19...♗xe4 20.c3 ♗xf3 21.cxb4 ♗b7 22.bxc5 and 19...♗xe4 20.♗xe4 ♗xe4, the latter clearly comes off better. I felt that in the former case the disruption of the queenside would give White counter-chances; I was also worried about the simple 20.♗xe4 ♗xe4 21.c4, with 22.♗c3 to follow.



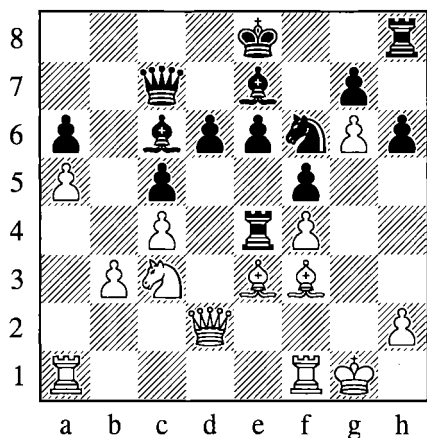
20.c4

Obviously aiming to pick up the audacious rook in exchange for a minor piece other than the light-squared bishop.

20...h6 21.g6?

The correct line was 21.♗c3 ♗xe3 22.♖xe3 hxe3 23.fxe3 ♗e5 24.♗xc6† ♖xc6, with a complex struggle.

21...f5 22.♗c3 ♗f6



It's now clear that Black's powerful centre, once set in motion, will sweep aside everything before it.

**23. ♖xe4 fxе4 24. ♖ad1 d5 25. cxd5 exd5
26. f5 d4 27. ♙f4 ♖c8 28. ♘e2 ♗xf5 29. ♙g3
♗xg6 30. ♘f4 ♗f7 31. ♖c2 g5 32. ♘e2 d3**

White resigned.

0-1

In 1946 Petrosian gained a brilliant victory in the all-union junior tournament for the second time, winning 13 games and conceding 2 draws. He travelled to Yerevan and won the Championship of Armenia, ahead of International Master Genrikh Kasparian, the leader of Armenian chess; again Petrosian came through without a single defeat. His successes were greeted with astonishment by that veteran of Russian chess, Dus-Chotimirsky:

"What? Just a boy – and he didn't lose a single game?"

In 1947, the veteran had occasion to convince himself of the young man's strength personally. This was in the next Armenian Championship, where they both shared 2nd-4th places with Kasparian – behind Grandmaster Bondarevsky, who, like Dus-Chotimirsky, was playing *hors concours*.

The authoritative testimony of another Russian veteran, Grigory Levenfish, was also

pleasing to the young player: "Petrosian's success is the rightful result of the gradual growth of his young talent. In the sphere of the opening, Petrosian possesses knowledge that some experienced masters could envy. He has a good feel for the position; in most of his games, he has strategically outplayed his young rivals and then finished them off with quick tactical strokes. He has quite good combinative vision, and rarely makes mistakes in calculation."

Mikhail Beilin recalls:

"I became closely acquainted with Tigran in the autumn of 1947 near Riga, where the final of the 'Spartak' club's individual championship was taking place. He was already Junior Champion of the USSR; he had won the Championship of Georgia in 1945 and the Armenian Men's Championship in 1946. You didn't need to be a prophet to predict a great future for Tigran. And his highly promising competitive achievements were not the only thing or the main thing. You only needed to listen to his comments after the end of the game to be struck by his depth of understanding, the accuracy of his judgements, his superb memory.

"In Petrosian's character, elements that were sharply distinct from each other, indeed diametrically opposed, were surprisingly combined. Already in those days he was sure of his own powers and yet at the same time, on occasion, he would prove unexpectedly peaceable. But the latter case affected only the result of this or that individual game. Petrosian was in no doubt that he ought to devote all his strength to perfecting himself in the art of chess. The environment best suited to this was in the capital, and he became a Muscovite.

"Here is what I was told at that time by Nikolai Sergeyevich Kolobov, the coach of the Moscow 'Spartak' club, a modest and kind man whom old 'Spartak' members recall even now:

“I put a proposal to the directors for helping Tigran Petrosian to move to Moscow. Of course they asked me questions – what about his lodging, what about his pay? And I said, he needs very little – tickets to football matches, and money for... ice cream. They decided to settle him for the present in a hostel in Tarasovka, where footballers train.

“In this way, the close association between the words Petrosian, ‘Spartak’ and Moscow originated. This steadfastness of his commitments in life, this unfailing loyalty to the objects of his enthusiasm, belonged to his nature. Petrosian’s love of football, hockey and tennis, his genuine interest in sport, remained with him throughout his life. Being endowed by nature with a delicate musical ear, he literally could not live without music; he would sing all kinds of songs, he had an interesting collection of gramophone records.”

But we should note that Petrosian didn’t immediately agree to the proposal to move to Moscow. It wasn’t easy for him to part from his Yerevan friends. As the well-known journalist Valery Asrian recounted many years later, it was Vladimir Makogonov, Honoured Master of Sport, who had the decisive word in the matter. In 1948 Tigran took part in the Trans-Caucasian Republics tournament and had to concede first place to that famous player. Makogonov was above all struck by the astounding positional flair that the youth displayed in many of his games. Once when they were taking a walk after the end of the day’s round, Petrosian confided in him that he had been invited to Moscow but hadn’t yet decided what to do. Hearing this, Makogonov was emphatic: “Don’t think twice about it, Tigran, just go. If I’d moved to Moscow in better years, say ten years ago, my life would have turned out differently. I’d have become a Grandmaster ages ago. Believe me, in Moscow you’ll have such an opportunity to improve, you’ll be able to meet the best players in the country and

learn from them – chances you don’t and can’t get in Yerevan. What’s more, you’ll always be in the eye of the chess authorities, the whole sporting establishment in fact – and that’s very important. So don’t worry about it. Move to the capital.”

GAME 3

Tigran Petrosian – Igor Bondarevsky

Yerevan 1947

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 e6 4.g3 dxc4 5.♖a4†
♙d7 6.♖xc4 c5 7.♙g2 ♙c6 8.0–0

An inaccuracy. White should play 8.dxc5 ♘bd7 9.♙e3 (but not 9.b4? a5 10.b5 ♙d5, with a capture on c5 to follow).

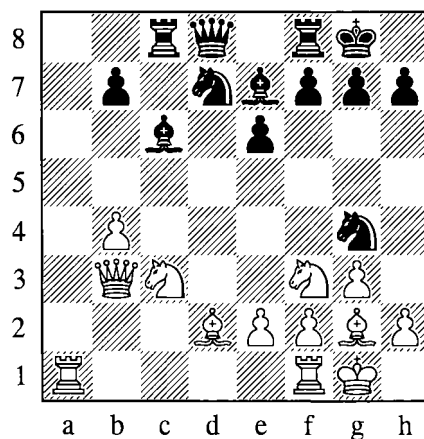
8...♘bd7 9.dxc5

Forced; 9.♘c3 leads to a difficult position after 9...b5!. Then 10.♘xb5? loses to 10...♘b6, while the queen’s retreat is met by ...c5-c4, giving Black the advantage on the queenside.

9...♙xc5 10.♘c3 0–0 11.b4 ♙e7 12.a3 a5
13.♙e3 axb4

The immediate 13...♞c8 was stronger.

14.axb4 ♞c8 15.♖b3 ♘g4 16.♙d2



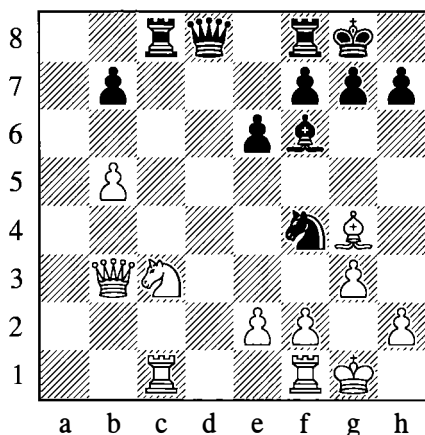
16...♖de5 17.♙f4 ♘g6 18.b5 ♙xf3 19.♙xf3
♘xf4 20.♙xg4!

It looks as if 20.gxf4 wins the pawn on b7, but after 20...♘xf2! White is the one who emerges a pawn down.

20...♙f6

Better 20...♗d4. Black was reckoning on a piece sacrifice, but noticed at the last moment that it wasn't clear enough.

21.♖a1



21...♙xc3

Black had been preparing 21...♗d2 22.gxf4 ♗xf4 23.♙f3 ♙e5 (23...♖c5 deserves attention) 24.♖fd1 ♗xh2† 25.♙f1 ♗h3†, but then 26.♙e1 follows (not, however, 26.♙g1? allowing mate in 4 moves).

22.♖xc3 ♖xc3 23.♗xc3 ♘d5 24.♗c5 ♗c7
25.♗xc7 ♘xc7 26.♙f3 ♘xb5

Draw agreed.

½–½

GAME 4

Tigran Petrosian – Gavriil Veresov

Moscow 1947

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.♗c2 d5
5.cxd5 exd5 6.♙g5

Botvinnik considers 6.♘f3 to be stronger, as was played in Veresov – Botvinnik, Moscow 1944. That game continued: 6...c5 7.♙g5 h6 8.♙xf6 ♗xf6 9.a3 ♙a5, and now with 10.dxc5 (instead of 10.0–0–0) White could have gained the advantage.

6...h6 7.♙xf6

In the game Mikenas – Botvinnik, Moscow 1940, White tried out 7.♙h4 c5 8.0–0–0, which led to a sharp struggle.

In Keres – Botvinnik, Leningrad 1941, 8.0–0–0 was again played. After 8...♙xc3 9.♗xc3 g5 10.♙g3 cxd4! (better than 10...♘e4 as in Belavenets – Simagin, Moscow 1940) 11.♗xd4 ♘c6 12.♗a4 ♙f5, White came under a crushing attack. Following that game, the variation with 7.♙h4 and 8.0–0–0 disappeared from practice.

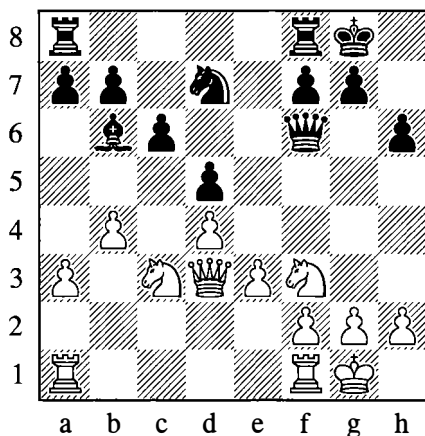
7...♗xf6 8.a3 ♙a5?!

A dubious move, giving White the chance to take the offensive on the queenside with gain of tempo.

9.b4 ♙b6 10.e3 ♙f5 11.♙d3 ♙xd3

Perhaps Black had been counting on 11...♗g6, but then realized that after 12.♙xf5 ♗xg2 13.f4 ♗xh1 14.0–0–0 h5 (the threat was 15.♙g4) 15.♗f2, he would lose his queen.

12.♗xd3 c6 13.♘f3 0–0 14.0–0 ♘d7

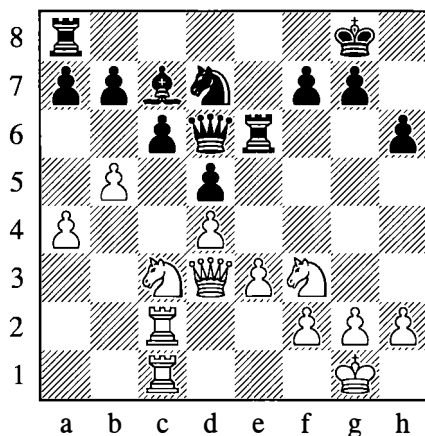


15.a4 Bfe8 16.Bfc1 Pd6 17.b5 Sc7

White would answer 17...Sc5 with 18.bxc6 bxc6 19.Ba6 Sc3 20.Bxc3 Qb6 21.Qd2, after which his advantage is not in doubt.

18.Ba2 Be6 19.Bac2

First 19.bxc6 bxc6, and only then 20.Bac2, would have been more exact.



19...Ba3! 20.bxc6

A second inaccuracy, after which Black could have obtained good chances with 20...Bxc6, for instance: 21.Bb5 Qb6 22.a5 a6! 23.Bb1 Bxa5! 24.Ba2 Bxc3 25.Bxc3 Bxc3.

20...bxc6? 21.Ba6 Qb6 22.a5

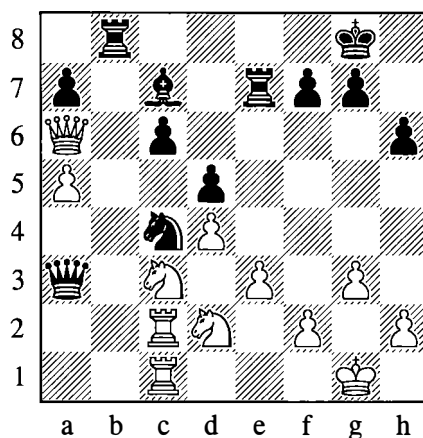
Another strong move was 22.Bb7, but

White was in no haste to play it, retaining it instead as a threat.

22...Re7 23.g3 Bb8 24.Qd2

A simple move which, by threatening 25.Qdb1 Qa1 26.Ba2, compels Black to give up material.

24...Qc4



25.Qxc6?

The correct course was 25.Qxc4 dxc4 26.Bxc6 Sc5 27.Qd5, followed 28.Bxc4. Instead White starts to "combine" and miscalculates, whereupon the struggle flares up with new vehemence.

25...Qxd2 26.Qxd5 Sc5

This is the move White had missed. Now Black temporarily acquires a material plus. However, the scattered state of the black pieces allows White to seize the initiative and obtain chances of victory after winning the a7-pawn.

The concluding part of the game was played in mutual time trouble.

27.Qxe7+ Bxe7 28.Bd5 Sc4 29.Bc7 Bf6

[Ed. note: Exchanging queens would give Black more chances of salvation: after 29...Se6 30.Bxe6 fxe6 31.Bxa7 Sf8, with 32...Qe4 to follow, he consolidates his forces.]

Chapter 2

1949-1951

In the spring of 1949 in Tbilisi, a semi-final of the 17th national Championship took place, and Petrosian finished second behind Geller. At last young Tigran's quality of play had brought tangible results – he had qualified for the Championship final. Here is how Ratmir Kholmov, the third qualifier, characterized Petrosian's performance: "The second finalist – the young master Petrosian – plays with exceptional ease. His play still perhaps lacks the necessary depth, but he copes expertly with tactical complexities."

So the 20-year-old Petrosian took part for the first time in the final of the USSR Championship. And his first acquaintance with the "top brass" left him in a state of shock – he finished in sixteenth place. But the setback did not discourage him, and his play gradually gained in confidence. Immersing himself in the life of the capital, Petrosian started to improve dramatically. In an amazingly short space of time he transformed himself from a promising master into one of the claimants to the chess crown. An important test was the 1950 Championship of Moscow, in which Tigran came third.

In his survey of that tournament, the *Izvestia* columnist Vasily Panov wrote: "Of all the new appearances in the Moscow Championship, the most interesting was undoubtedly the chess début of the young Armenian master Petrosian, who was playing in the final of this event for the first time since he moved to Moscow. There was nothing at all wrong with this début, as his third-place finish testifies. Petrosian's talent, which recalls the style of Averbakh, is still in a process of evolution. I feel like advising the young master to display more of the southern temperament and less northern rationality. Of course, Petrosian's numerous draws can partly be blamed on the powerful line-up of the Championship and his unfamiliarity with his opponents' strength of play, which necessitated caution. At any rate, Petrosian showed himself to be a solid, determined and excellently prepared chess competitor."

In the 1951 Moscow Championship, Petrosian was the winner. Everyone was amazed at how easily he would find the best continuations. Time trouble was foreign to him – one of the qualities of Capablanca in his youth. At blitz chess, Tigran had practically no equals; he was to win the Moscow lightning championship several times. And when he began travelling abroad, he easily beat everyone at it, including Najdorf, a great blitz specialist.

The growth of his strength and mastery recalled the climbing of a mountain – slow, but sure. Petrosian qualified again for the USSR Championship final (the 18th), where he improved on his showing of the previous year; he shared 12th-13th places.

In the following national Championship (the 19th, in 1951) Petrosian lost his first two games but went on to share 2nd-3rd places with Geller, half a point behind Keres but ahead of Botvinnik and Smyslov. Apart from the official reward, he received a special prize for the

best result against Grandmasters. This was a triumph for the young master, not only from the competitive standpoint but in the quality of his play. Assessing Petrosian's play in the Championship, Panov wrote that "he has an excellent command of the art of positional manoeuvring, and strives to ground his subtle strategic plans in deep and accurate calculation."

From that time on, Petrosian was to take part regularly in the national Championship final.

GAME 5

Tigran Petrosian – Isosif Pogrebinsky

Tbilisi 1949

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♖f3 ♙g7 4.g3 0–0 5.♙g2 d5 6.cxd5 ♖xd5 7.0–0 c5

Another move frequently played is 7...♖b6.

8.e4 ♖f6

The continuation 8...♖b6 9.d5 e6 10.♙g5 f6 11.♙e3 f5!? is interesting. After 12.e5 White probably gains the advantage. Black's 8...♖f6 has been tested in practice plenty of times. In the present game Black tries to carry out a plan of attacking the e5-pawn.

9.e5 ♖fd7 10.♖g5 cxd4 11.f4 ♖c5

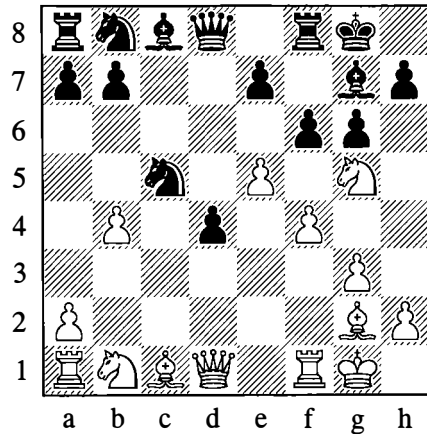
A possibility was 11...♖c6, not fearing 12.e6 ♖c5 13.exf7+ ♖h8.

12.b4

The point of 10.♖g5 becomes clear from the variation 12...♖e6 13.♖xe6 fxe6, after which the bishop on g7 is shut out of play for good. However, with 13...♙xe6! 14.♙xb7 ♙d5 15.♙xa8 ♙xa8, Black could have cast doubt on White's strategy which was to be vindicated in the game.

12...f6?

Now White succeeds in seriously weakening his opponent's kingside.

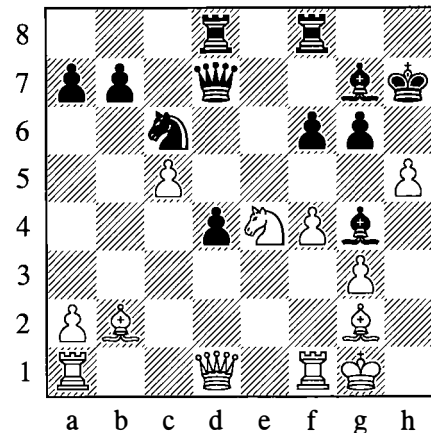


13.exf6 exf6 14.♖xh7 ♖xh7 15.bxc5 ♖c6 16.♙b2 ♖c7

The start of a passive plan that quickly leads to Black's downfall. A more energetic line was 16...♙f5.

17.♖d2 ♙e6 18.♖e4 ♖ad8 19.h4 ♖d7 20.h5 ♙g4

Black tries to intercept the white queen's action along the d1-h5 diagonal, but White has a small combination that immediately decides the outcome of the struggle.



21.hxg6† ♘xg6 22.f5† ♕xf5

On 22...♗xf5 White has the decisive 23.♗b1!.

23.♘d6!

This “quiet” move contains the point of the combination.

23...♙g4 24.♙e4† ♘h5 25.♗f4 f5 26.♗xg4 fxg4 27.♗d2 ♗h8 28.♔g2

Black resigned.

1–0

GAME 6

Tigran Petrosian – Andor Lilienthal

Moscow 1949

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙b5 ♙b4

Black may also play 4...♘d4, which usually leads to a sharp fight. White can, however, opt to simplify the position with 5.♘xd4 exd4 6.e5 dxc3 7.exf6 ♗xf6 (7...cxd2† 8.♙xd2 ♗xf6 9.0–0 is dangerous, as Black is too far behind in development) 8.dxc5 ♗e5† 9.♗e2 etc.

5.0–0 0–0 6.d3 ♙xc3 7.bxc3 d6 8.♙g5 ♗e7

Black selects the defence that involves transferring the knight from c6 to d8 and e6.

9.♗e1 ♘d8 10.d4 ♘e6 11.♙c1

If 11.♙h4, then after the manoeuvre ...♘e6–f4–g6 the white bishop will be forced to abandon the h4–d8 diagonal.

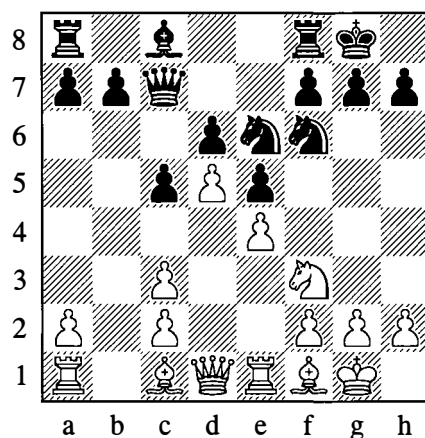
11...c5

Black often plays 11...c6.

12.♙f1

Another possibility is 12.♙d3.

12...♗c7 13.d5



13...♘d8

Instead 13...♘f4 is dubious in view of 14.♙xf4 exf4 15.e5 dxe5 16.♘xe5. For example, 16...♗d8 17.c4 b5 18.♗f3 ♙b7 19.♗ad1 bxc4 20.♙xc4 ♗d6 21.♙b3, or 18...bxc4 19.d6 ♗b7 20.♗xf4 with advantage to White.

14.♘h4 ♘e8 15.g3

Preparing 16.f4.

15...♗e7 16.♘f5

Forcing Black to capture on f5. Otherwise White would continue with 17.♘e3 and bring the knight to c4.

16...♙xf5 17.exf5 ♗f6 18.♗g4 ♗e7

He can't play 18...g6 because of 19.♙g5! and 20.♙e7, winning the exchange; while 18...h6 would set up a target for a possible pawn attack by White. Black's 17...♗f6 turns out to have been a waste of tempo.

19.♙g5 ♗d7

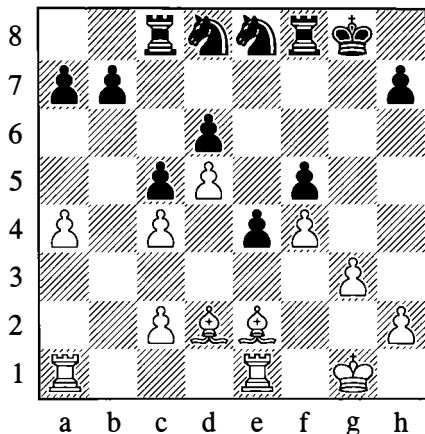
If 19...♘f6, then 20.♗d1.

20.a4 f6 21.♙d2 g6 22.♙h3 ♗xf5 23.♗xf5 gxf5 24.♙xf5 ♘g7 25.♙d3 f5

Black should have played 25...♘f7, keeping the position closed. With 25...f5 he is helping White to open it up.

26.f4 e4

Even now, 26...♟f7 would have been better.

27.♙e2 ♜c8 28.c4 ♟e8**29.h3!**

Preparing 30.g4, after which Black's position becomes critical.

29...♟f6 30.g4 fxg4 31.hxg4 ♜c7 32.♙f2 h6 33.♜h1 e3†

Trying to create counter-chances, but without success.

34.♙xe3 ♟e4† 35.♙g2 ♟f7 36.♙d3 ♜e7 37.♜ae1 ♜fe8 38.♙c1 ♟c3 39.♜xe7 ♜xe7 40.a5 b6 41.axb6 axb6 42.♙d2 ♟e2 43.c3 b5 44.♙f3

Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 7

Ratmir Kholmov – Tigran Petrosian

Moscow 1949

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5

After this move Black easily obtains a good game by creating pressure against the central d4-pawn.

3...c5 4.c3 ♟c6 5.♟f3 ♜b6 6.♙e2 cxd4 7.cxd4 ♟ge7 8.b3 ♟f5 9.♙b2 ♙b4† 10.♙f1 h5

All this had been seen in the game Aitken – Bondarevsky, radio match 1946, which continued 11.h4 ♙d7 12.♟c3 ♙xc3 13.♙xc3 ♜ac8 14.♜h3 ♟ce7 15.♜d2 ♙b5 16.♟g1 ♟g6, and Black won on the 34th move.

11.♟c3 ♙xc3

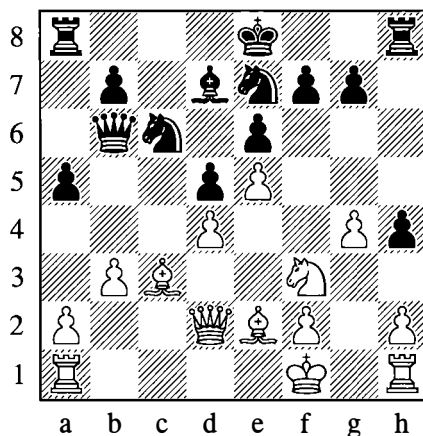
Of course not 11...♟xd4? 12.♟a4. In the event of 11...♙d7, Black didn't like the look of 12.♟a4 followed by a2-a3 and b3-b4, when his position is very cramped.

12.♙xc3 ♙d7 13.♜d2 a5

Black's plan involves an exchange of light-squared bishops, but 13...♟ce7 would fail to 14.♙a5 ♜c6 15.♜c1. With ...a7-a5 he defends against this threat.

14.g3

Probably 14.h4 was better. Black now obtains the possibility of weakening the white king's position.

14...h4 15.g4 ♟fe7**16.h3**

On 16.♜g5, Black intended 16...0-0-0 with complications. Yet that is how White

ought to have played. After 17.♖xg7 ♜g6 (or 17...♜hg8 18.♗f6 ♜xg4 19.♜xh4±) 18.♗f6 White's chances are better (but not 18.♗xf7 ♜ce7 19.♞c1 ♜b8 20.h3 ♞df8 21.♗g7 ♞b5 22.♜g1 ♜hg8 23.♗h6 ♞f7 24.♞h2 ♞gf8 25.♗d2 ♜c6 26.♞xb5 ♗xb5† 27.♜e2 ♜f4 28.♗e3 ♜d3 29.a4 ♗a6 30.♞c2 ♞f3 31.♗d2 ♜xf2). A worse option would be 17.♜xh4 f6!.

16...f6 17.♜g2 ♞f8 18.♞d3?

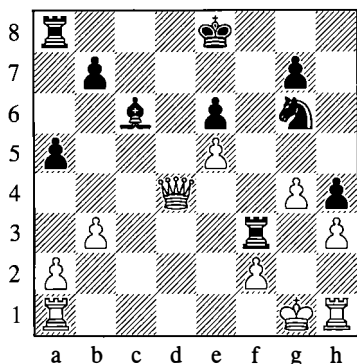
By depriving Black of the g6-square, White forestalls a knight sortie to f4. However, after 18.exf6 gxf6 (18...♞xf6 is bad in view of 19.♜xh4 followed by f2-f4) 19.♜xh4 e5 20.♞ad1, it wouldn't be easy for Black to prove that his attacking chances compensated him for White's extra pawn. As the game goes, he obtains a promising position.

18...fxe5 19.♜xe5

White would lose at once with 19.dxe5 ♞xf3! 20.♜xf3 d4 21.♞b2 ♜xe5† 22.♜e2 ♜xd3 23.♜xd3 ♞b5† 24.♜c2 ♗c6†.

19...♜xe5 20.dxe5 d4! 21.♞xd4 ♞c6† 22.♜g1 ♗c7?

With this move Black gives White the chance to rid himself of all his difficulties by sacrificing the exchange with 23.♗e3. With the queen sacrifice 22...♗xd4! Black could have reached a position where the active placing of his pieces would make White's defence very difficult. For example: 23.♞g6† ♜xg6 24.♗xd4 ♞f3 (evidently the strongest move).

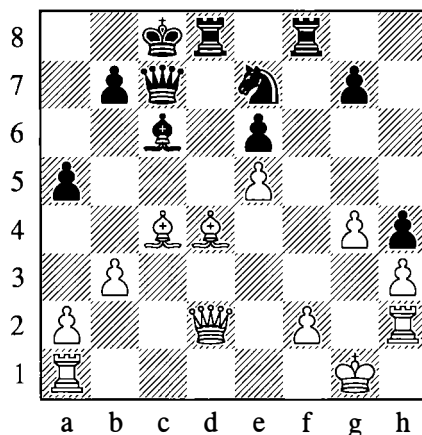


Now either 25.♞e1 ♞d8 26.♗c4 ♜f4 27.♞h2 ♞d2 or 25.♞c1 ♜f4 would be in Black's favour. The variations are highly complex and interesting. A thorough analysis may well be able to prove an advantage for one side or the other, but in a practical game the black side would be a good deal easier to play.

23.♞h2?

A crucial error.

23...0-0-0 24.♞c4



24...♜g6?

An error in return, letting the win slip. In his calculations Black had been intending to win a piece by 24...♗d7 25.♞d1 ♞f3, exploiting the bad placing of the white pieces on the d-file. However he rejected this line on account of 26.♗xa5 (26.♞e2 ♞xe2 27.♗xe2 ♜c6 28.♗c4 ♞f4+; 26.♗c3! ♜c6 [26...♜b8 27.♞a7†+–] 27.♞d2 ♗f7 28.♞e3 ♞xd2 29.♞xd2 ♞d8 30.♞b5 ♗g6) 26...♜c6 27.♗a8† ♜c7 28.♞b6†, overlooking that after 28...♜xb6 29.♞xd7 he could play 29...♗xa8. Hence he decided to bring up his knight to join the battle.

25.♗e3

On making this move White offered a draw, which Black declined. However, after thinking

for 40 minutes without finding any realistic chances to play for a win, he consented to the draw after all – incurring a reprimand from the masters who were present. They maintained that 25...♖xd4 26.♗xd4 ♘xe5 27.♙e2 ♙f3 would have won. But this is unconvincing in view of 28.♗e3 ♙xe2 29.♖c1 ♙c4 (29...♘f3† 30.♙g2) 30.f4, and it is White who wins.

True, in place of 27...♙f3 Black could continue with 27...♘f3† 28.♙xf3 ♙xf3. Then in the long run White would be obliged to give the exchange back, and the outcome would probably be a peaceful one anyway.

For the next 15 moves Black only had 8 minutes left, and under the pressure of approaching time trouble he accepted the draw offer.

½–½

GAME 8

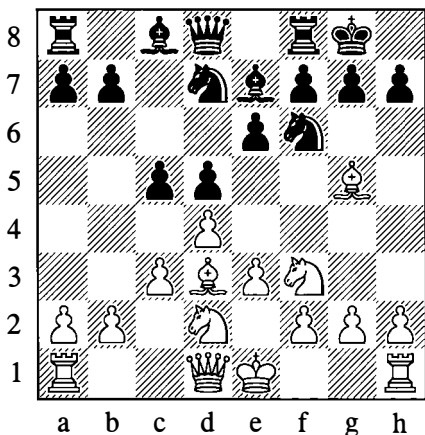
Tigran Petrosian – Victor Liublinsky

Moscow 1949

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.♙g5 c5 4.e3 ♙e7

The most active continuation is 4...♗b6. White is then practically forced to go in for a pawn sacrifice with 5.♘bd2, seeing that 5.b3 or 5.♗c1 would be too passive.

5.♘bd2 d5 6.c3 ♘bd7 7.♙d3 0–0?!



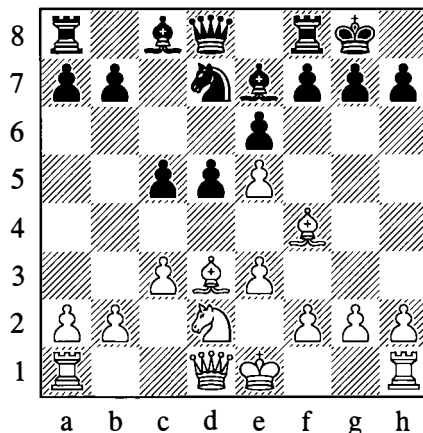
An inaccuracy, allowing White to acquire active play by invading on e5 with his knight. The right move was 7...♗c7.

8.♘e5!

The key move. If White doesn't succeed in establishing a knight on e5, his entire system of play promises him nothing. You can now understand the reason for recommending 7...♗c7. The knight wouldn't then be able to go to the key square, and if White tried bringing his bishop into the fight for the e5-point with 8.♙f4, Black would parry with 8...♙d6. No matter how many times I played this system later, I never gained any advantage if I didn't manage to set up a knight outpost on e5. Fortunately though, not all my opponents in those years took the system with ♙g5 seriously; evidently to them it was like some rustic inventor's bicycle.

8...♘xe5 9.dxe5 ♘d7 10.♙f4!

An exchange of bishops would be wholly senseless. The pawn on e5 is cramping Black's position – and any exchange, reducing the quantity of pieces on the board, would alleviate his lot. After all, the fewer pieces there are, the less space is needed for manoeuvring. Apart from that, after 10.♙xe7 ♗xe7 11.f4 or 11.♘f3, Black could start an immediate attack against White's pawn wedge with 11...f6.



But now if 10...f6, the reply 11.♖h5 is most unpleasant for Black. It forces 11...f5, as 11...g6 would be met by the obvious sacrifice 12.♗xg6 hxg6 13.♙xg6† ♕h8 14.h4. White's threats are then scarcely to be fended off – for instance, 14...fxe5 15.♖h5† ♕g8 16.♗h6 ♖f6 17.♖h3. Black's wish to cut off any possible threats on the b1-h7 diagonal without delay is therefore natural.

10...f5

Not at all a bad move in the present situation. It now looks hard for White to think about attacking. But what other plan is he to choose? Prepare to castle long? But then Black would try to set his queenside pawns in motion quickly, with his advanced pawn on c4 acting as the equivalent of White's pawn on e5. He would only need to push his b-pawn to b4, and he would clearly be ahead of White in developing his attack. Castling kingside is senseless for White, nor is it simple to carry out – after 11.0–0 g5 12.♗g3 f4 the bishop perishes. Of course, the right to castle could be earned, for instance by the precaution of withdrawing the bishop to g3. As long as White has *not* castled short, it makes no sense for Black to advance his g-pawn.

But then, White didn't select this formation merely in order to dream about castling on one side or the other after 10 moves had been played:

11.h4!

An important blockading move! The safety of the bishop on f4 is now guaranteed, and another thematic move – g2-g4 – is placed on the agenda. We will note in passing that the capture on h4 is fatal owing to the obvious 12.♖h5.

11...c4 12.♗c2 b5

The immediate 12...♗c5 would be better, enabling Black to shut off the white bishop's

diagonal at once with ...♗e4 if the need should arise.

13.♗f3

I dare say 13.g4 would have been more resolute. Today I consider both these moves to be of equal worth, but we all know how hard it sometimes is to make the correct choice even between pleasant options.

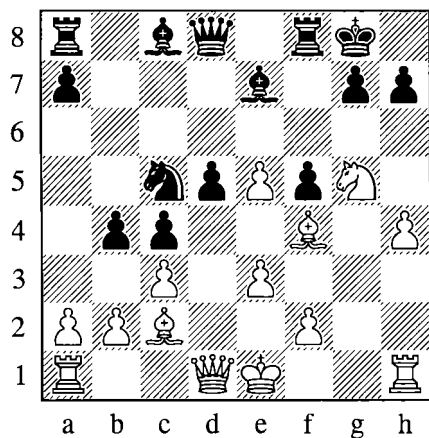
With 13.♗f3 White has set up the concrete threat of 14.♗g5, after which his opponent would face an awkward choice. Clearly Black preferred 12...b5 to any other move because he wanted to push this pawn further in a hurry, but after 13.♗f3 it becomes clear that 13...b4 14.♗g5 sets him some difficult problems. If 14...♗c5, then 15.♖h5 h6 16.♖g6. On the other hand after 14...♗xg5 15.hxg5 ♖e7, a familiar sacrifice occurs: 16.♖xh7, with an attack of which the following variation demonstrates the power: 16...♗xh7 17.♖h5† ♕g8 18.g6 ♗f6 19.♖h2! (better than 19.exf6 gxf6 20.♗d6 ♖g7). The threat of 20.♗e2 and 21.♖h1 forces Black to attack the g6-pawn at once with 19...♖e8, but then White can play 20.exf6 ♖xg6 21.fxg7 ♗xg7 22.♗e5† ♗f7 23.♗d1, winning.

13...♗c5 14.g4 b4 15.gxf5

Hastily played. I felt that my opponent was starting to outpace me. Obviously I didn't like 15.cxb4 ♗d3† 16.♗xd3 ♗xb4† 17.♗f1 cxd3 18.♖xd3 fxg4 (or 18...a5), after which no trace of White's attack remains.

A stronger move was 15.♗d4. The point is that positionally White's affairs are in good shape. On d4 the knight has a splendid post; when the exchange on f5 takes place, Black will be forced to recapture with his e-pawn, leaving the d5-pawn backward and potentially weak. However, I went in for a forced variation, reckoning that it would bring victory.

15...exf5 16.♗g5



16...g6?

Black wants to keep the enemy queen out of h5, but he overlooks a fairly obvious threat. After 16...h6 17.♖h5 ♘d3† 18.♙xd3 cxd3 19.♗g6 hxg5 20.hxg5 ♜e8 21.♖h7† ♕f7 22.♞h6 ♞g8, the outcome of the game would be unclear. Black could also meet 17.♖h5 with 17...♜e8, after which White would retain no more than a positional plus.

17.h5!

Now the h-file is opened, seeing that after 17...♙xg5 18.♙xg5 ♜xg5 19.♖xd5† ♙e6 20.♖xc5 White's advantage is not in doubt.

17...♘d3† 18.♙xd3 cxd3 19.hxg6 hxg6

With 19...♙xg5, Black would be setting a small trap: 20.♖h5 h6!. But after 20.♞xh7! he would still lose.

20.♖xd3 bxc3 21.bxc3 ♙xg5 22.♙xg5 ♜a5 23.♙f6 ♞e8 24.♖d4 ♕f7 25.e6† ♞xe6 26.♙d8!

Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 9

Tigran Petrosian – Alexander Tolush

Moscow 1950

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.d4 c6

The game has transposed to a position frequently encountered in the tournaments of the last few years.

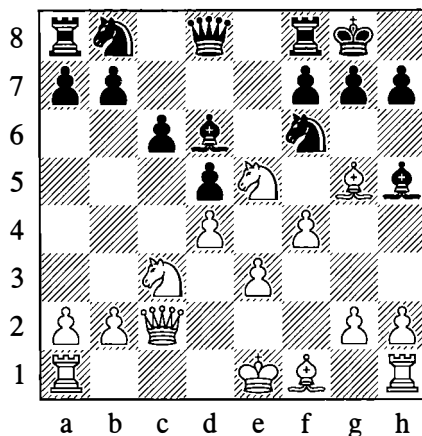
5.cxd5 exd5 6.♞c2

Stopping the bishop from developing on f5.

6...♙d6

In the game Petrosian – Aronin from the 6th round, Black played more accurately with 6...♙g4 7.♙g5 ♙e7 8.e3 ♘bd7 9.♙d3 ♙h5 10.♘h4 0-0 11.♘f5 ♙g6, and achieved equality.

7.♙g5 0-0 8.e3 ♙g4 9.♘e5 ♙h5 10.f4



10...♙a5?

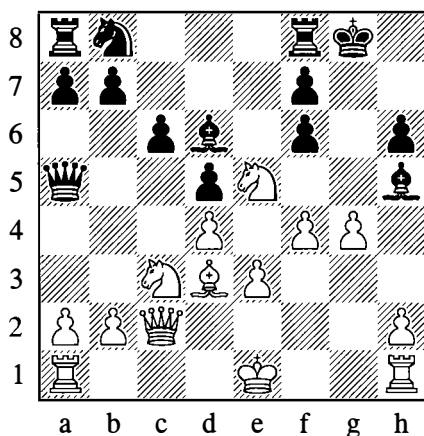
Of course passive defence is not in Tolush's style, but this premature attempt at counterplay with his queenside undeveloped meets with a decisive rebuttal. He should have played 10...♖e8, ridding himself of the awkward pin without removing his queen from the battle

zone. He would then probably have obtained adequate counter-chances, answering 11.♔d3 with 11...♘g4, or 11.h3 with 11...♘fd7.

11.♔d3 h6

There was hardly any improvement in 11...♞e8. White would continue 12.♔xf6 gxf6 13.♔xh7† ♔f8 14.♞f5, with a very strong attack.

12.♔xf6 gxf6 13.g4!



13...fxe5 14.fxe5 ♔e7 15.0-0-0!

White has no reason to hurry, as the bishop on h5 is trapped. On 15...♔xg4, the natural 16.♞dg1 is decisive, while 15...♔g6 loses to 16.♔xg6 f×g6 17.♞xg6† ♔h8 18.♞xh6† ♔g8 19.♞hf1 followed by 20.♞f5.

15...♔g5 16.gxh5 ♔h8

Nothing is altered by 16...♔xe3† 17.♔b1.

17.♞f2 f5 18.h4 ♔e7 19.♞f4

Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 10

Paul Keres – Tigran Petrosian

Moscow 1950

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 ♘c6

The best continuation is considered to be 3...c5. However, the position arising after 4.exd5 exd5 5.♔b5† ♔d7 6.♞e2† is not to everyone's taste, as White obtains a small but lasting plus. Black's 3...♘c6 also leads to a difficult game for him, but it enables him to create tactical complications.

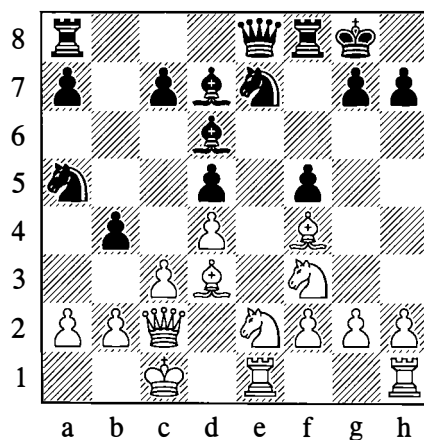
4.c3 f5?

A move that weakens the squares e5 and e6. Black should play 4...e5!

5.exf5 exf5 6.♔d3 ♔d6 7.♘e2! ♘ge7 8.♘f3 0-0 9.♞c2 ♞e8 10.♔d2 ♔d7 11.0-0-0 ♘a5

It was worth thinking about 11...b5, and if 12.♔xb5 then 12...♘xd4. However, after 12.♘f4 b4 13.c4 White would obtain the advantage.

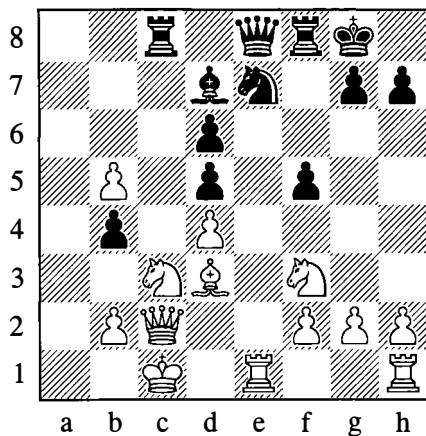
12.♘f4 b5 13.♞d1 b4



Black is going in for a risky combination involving a piece sacrifice, which ought to lead to a loss against correct defence. But with

other continuations White also has the better chances.

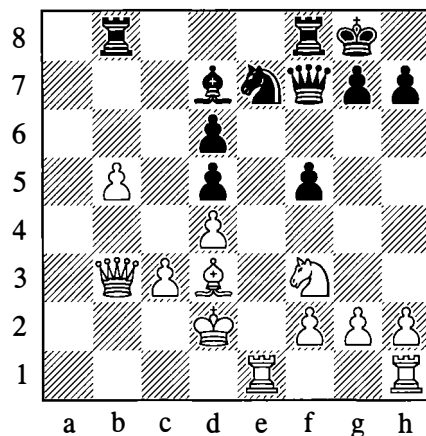
14. Qxd6 cxd6 15. cxb4 Qac6 16. a3 a5 17. b5 Qb4 18. axb4 Rxc8 19. Qc3 axb4



20. Qd2 ?

White wrongly returns the sacrificed piece. He could play more strongly with 20. We2! Qd8 (20... Rf7 21. g5 bxc3 22. Qxf7 cxb2+ 23. Qxb2 Qxf7 24. Wh5+ , and White wins) 21. We7 Qa5 22. Qxd7 bxc3 23. Qd1! , and no continuation of Black's attack is to be seen.

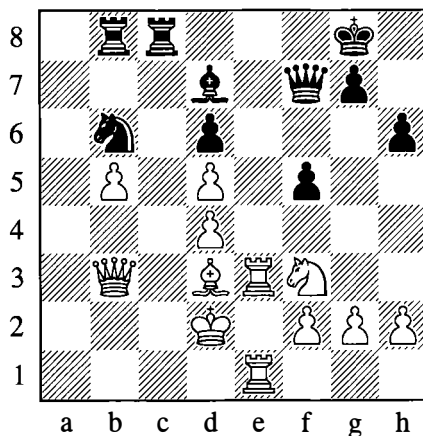
20... Rf7 21. Qb3 bxc3+ 22. bxc3 Rb8



23. Re3

Having once gone wrong, and in time trouble as well, White fails to find the right plan. He should have played 23. Rb1 Qc8 24. Rhc1 Qb6 25. Qe2 , removing his king to a safe place.

23... h6 24. Rhe1 Qc8 25. c4 Qb6 26. cxd5 Rfc8



27. Re7

The situation has become dangerous for White, and he should be striving for simplification with 27. Rc1 Rxc1 28. Qxc1 Qxd5 – after which the chances would be about equal.

27... Qf6 28. h4 Ra8 29. Re2 f4 30. Qe5 ?

A time-trouble miscalculation. He should have played 30. Re4 .

30... dxe5 31. dxe5 Qe7 32. Re4 Ra3 33. Qb2 Qf5 34. Qd4

Nothing would be altered by 34. Rd4 Rxd3+ 35. Rxd3 Qc4+ , or 34. d6 Qa7 .

34... Ra2+ 35. Qd1 Qa3

White resigned.

0–1

GAME 11

Tigran Petrosian – Igor Bondarevsky

Moscow 1950

1.♖f3 e6 2.g3 f5 3.♙g2 ♖f6 4.0–0 ♙e7 5.d4 0–0 6.c4 c6

If 6...d5, then 7.b3 c6 8.♙a3, and White forces a favourable exchange of dark-squared bishops.

7.♗c2

Given the move order that Black has chosen, he would reply to the bishop exchange – 7.b3 ♗e8 8.♙a3 ♙xa3 9.♖xa3 – not with ...d7-d5, but with ...d7-d6 followed by ...e6-e5.

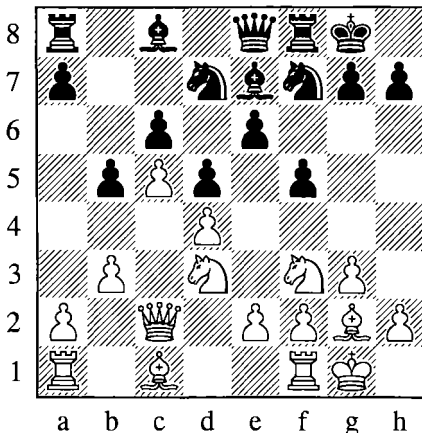
7...♗e8 8.♖bd2 d5 9.♖e5

White has decided to arrange his knights on d3 and f3, clamping down on the e5-point.

9...♖bd7 10.♖d3 ♖e4 11.♖f3 ♖d6

The start of a faulty plan. Black should be trying for an attack on the kingside by continuing 11...♗h5 or 11...g5. Instead he goes in for queenside play, which favours White who has a lead in development and controls more space.

12.b3 b5 13.c5 ♖f7



14.a4!

With this move White forces the opening of the a-file, after which the pawn on a7 becomes weak.

14...bxa4

It would be even worse to play 14...a6 15.axb5 cxb5.

15.♗xa4 ♙f6 16.♙b2 a6

Here 16...e5 would hardly be any better, for example 17.dxe5 ♖fxe5 18.♗fa1 ♖xd3 19.exd3 ♙xb2 20.♗xb2 ♖xc5 21.♗xa7, or 17.dxe5 ♖dxe5 18.♗fa1, with advantage to White. But now White prevents the ...e6-e5 advance for good.

17.♖fe5 ♖fxe5 18.dxe5 ♙e7 19.f4 ♗b8

If 19...g5, then 20.fxg5 ♙xg5 21.♙c1 is in White's favour.

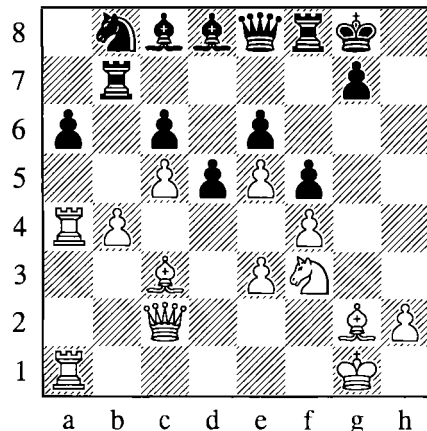
20.♗fa1 ♗b5 21.b4

White wants to transfer his knight to d4; he also wants the option of answering 21...g5 with 22.fxg5 ♙xg5 23.♙c1. He therefore refrains from the natural-looking 21.♙d4.

21...h5 22.♙c3 h4 23.e3 ♖b8

Now and on the next move it would have been better to play ...hxg3, with ...g7-g5 to follow.

24.♖e1 ♗b7 25.gxh4 ♙xh4 26.♖f3 ♙d8



27.h4! ♖h5 28.♙e1 ♙d7

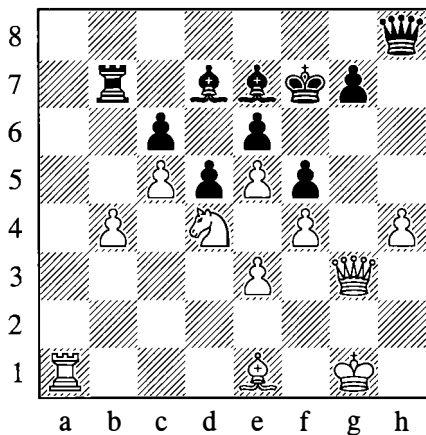
He shouldn't have left the a6-pawn without protection, especially since Black has no time to carry out the manoeuvre ...♙d7-e8-h5 in any case.

29.♖f2 ♜f7?

It was essential to play 29...♙c8, when it wouldn't have been so simple for White to exploit his positional advantage. The move played leads to the loss of a pawn, after which Black's position collapses.

30.♙f1 ♜h8 31.♙xa6 ♜xa6 32.♝xa6 ♙e7 33.♝a7 ♜hb8 34.♝xb7 ♝xb7 35.♜d4 ♖h8 36.♖g3

An immediate 36.b5 was also playable.



36...♖b8

[Ed. note: By preventing the threatened b4-b5 with 36...♝c7, Black could have put up more stubborn resistance.]

37.h5 ♝a7 38.♝c1

White avoids his opponent's trap: after 38.♝xa7 ♖xa7 39.♖g6† ♜f8 40.♜xe6† ♙xe6 41.♖xe6 ♖a1 42.♖c8† ♜f7 43.♖xf5† ♜g8 he would be compelled to surrender his bishop or give perpetual check.

38...♖g8 39.♖g6† ♜f8 40.b5 ♖f7 41.bxc6

Here the game was adjourned. Black sealed 41...♙c8 and resigned the following day without resuming. After 42.♖xf7† ♜xf7 43.♜b5 ♝a8 44.♜d6† ♜f8 45.c7, White easily wins.

1-0

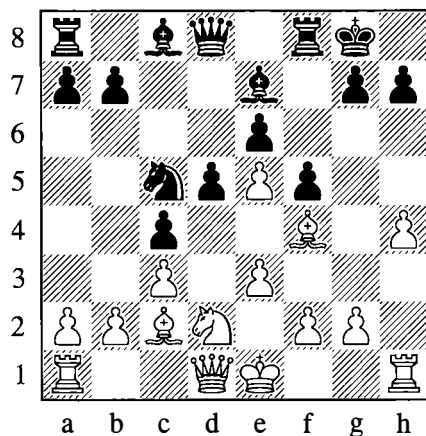
GAME 12

Tigran Petrosian – Anatoly Bannik

Sverdlovsk 1951

1.d4 ♜f6 2.♜f3 e6 3.♙g5 c5 4.e3 ♙e7 5.♜bd2 d5 6.c3 ♜bd7 7.♙d3 0-0 8.♜e5! ♜xe5 9.dxe5 ♜d7 10.♙f4! f5 11.h4! c4 12.♙c2 ♜c5

I had recommended this move in the notes to my game with Liublinsky on page 36.



13.♜f3 ♙d7 14.♜d4 ♖b6 15.♙g5!?

A laudable idea for acquiring a long-term advantage founded on possession of the square d4. Properly speaking, this square is only important by virtue of the possibility of establishing a knight there. The knight on d4, as befits a centralized knight, is controlling a wide tract of the board. Other pieces on d4 would have nothing in particular to do. I could have pursued the same idea by exchanging bishops a move earlier with 14.♙g5, gearing myself to a lengthy struggle.

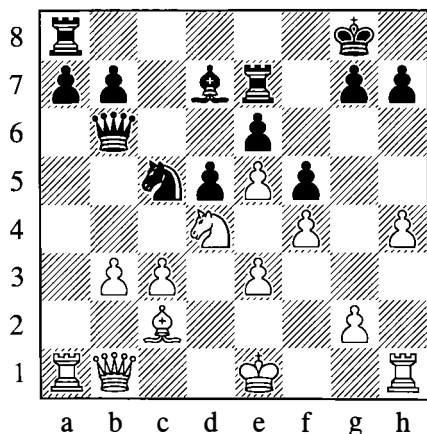
But my quick win against Liublinsky (show me someone who *doesn't* want to win quickly at chess!) had stuck in my memory. For that reason, without going into any special analysis of variations, I took for granted that it made no sense for Black to capture on g5 and open the h-file. Few players in young years would look seriously at the variation 15...♙xg5 16.hxg5 ♜xb2 – although that is just how Black ought to have played. In reply to 17.♞xh7, not a bad response is 17...♘d3†, although 17...♙xh7 is also possible; after 18.♞h5† ♙g8 19.g6 ♞xa1† 20.♙e2 ♞f8 White has nothing better than perpetual check. Evidently the experienced Bannik wasn't agreeable to a draw with the young Petrosian.

15...♞f7 16.♙xe7 ♞xe7 17.♞b1! ♙a4 18.b3

White mustn't of course exchange the light-squared bishops, as the black knight would then land on d3.

18...cxb3 19.axb3 ♙d7 20.f4!

White can't do without this move, in view of a possible attack on the e5-pawn.



Now the centre (white pawns on e3-e5-f4 versus black pawns on d5-e6-f5) has become solidified once and for all. Black is permanently deprived of the possibility to play ...f5-f4. White will not be able to carry out

any operations with pawns in the centre either. Nonetheless his position is superior, thanks to the disparity in the effective values of the pieces. White's bishop and knight are patently stronger than their opposite numbers.

White's task is to steer the struggle in a direction that enables him to utilize the assets of his position; and this means it is imperative to open lines for his rooks. For that reason it would suit Black's purpose to play 20...h5, locking the kingside and compelling White to seek success on the queenside only.

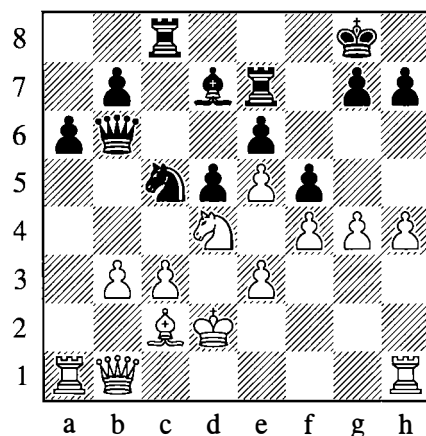
20...♞c8 21.♙d2!

The king occupies a safe position here, and gives advance notice that Black's hopes of putting pressure on the c3-pawn are futile.

21...a6

This was Black's last chance to play ...h7-h5.

22.g4!



After this, the position may be considered lost for Black.

22...♘e4† 23.♙xe4 ♞xe4

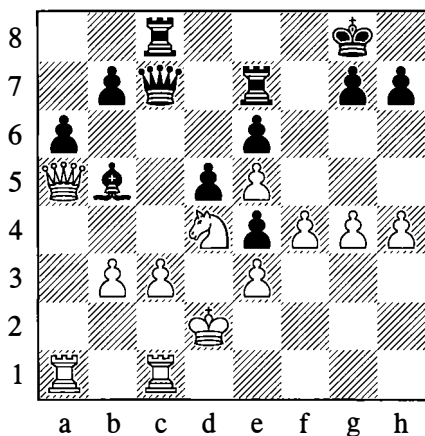
The mighty knight on d4 against the bad bishop on d7, added to the mobile pawns on the kingside, makes the outcome of the fight a foregone conclusion. It only remains for the

white major pieces to start acting in concert with the knight, and the positional weaknesses in Black's position will start falling like over-ripe apples from the tree.

24. ♖a2

The queen begins looking for a square where it can exercise its capabilities.

24... ♜c7 25. ♜hcl ♔b5 26. ♖a5



26... ♜d7?

It would be better to play the bishop to d3 after exchanging queens. Of course, the bishop on d3 just by itself would not be a fighting unit. But when files were opened, they would open up for Black's rooks as well as White's, and then if White showed any carelessness, Black could hope to obtain counterplay.

27. ♖b4 ♔d3 28. ♜g1!

White could play 28.f5? at once, but after 28...exf5 29.e6 ♜e8 (or 29...♜c7) 30.gxf5 ♜h5 31.♜g1 ♜xh4 32.♜g2 ♜f6 he would realize he had been rather over-hasty.

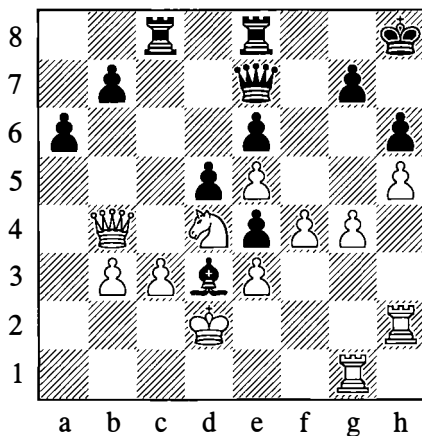
28... ♜e8 29. ♜ac1

This move is not as pointless as all that. Black mustn't be given even the slightest chance to play ...♜ec7.

29... ♔h8 30.h5 ♜d7 31. ♜h1 h6?

Black sticks his own head into the noose. It is obvious now that the advance of White's g-pawn will lead to the opening of the g-file, on which, for good measure, Black has presented his opponent with an outpost for his rooks.

32. ♜h2 ♜ec8 33. ♜g1 ♜e7



34. ♜d6!

After a series of leisurely moves White proceeds to energetic operations. The story of the endgame is a familiar one: the knight on d4 and a white rook on g6 will sweep Black's position away.

34... ♜xd6 35.exd6 ♜cd8 36.g5 e5 37.fxe5 ♜xe5 38.gxh6 gxh6 39.♜g6 ♜g5 40.♜xh6 ♔g7 41.♜e6

And Black resigned on the 47th move.
...1-0

GAME 13

Isaak Lipnitsky – Tigran Petrosian

Moscow 1951

1.e4 e5 2.♔f3 ♔c6 3.♔c4 ♔e7

This move leads to a quiet game, though one in which Black is rather passive.

4.d4 d6 5.♘c3

A move often seen here, 5.d5, leads to positions typical of the King's Indian Defence which I am happy to play.

5...♘f6 6.h3 0-0 7.0-0 a6

Either here or on the next move, the freeing combination 7...♘xe4 8.♘xe4 d5 turns out badly. After 9.♗xd5 ♖xd5 10.♘c3 Black is in considerable difficulties, for example: 10...♗a5 11.♘xe5 ♘xe5 12.dxe5 ♗xe5 13.♖e1 ♗d6 14.♗f3.

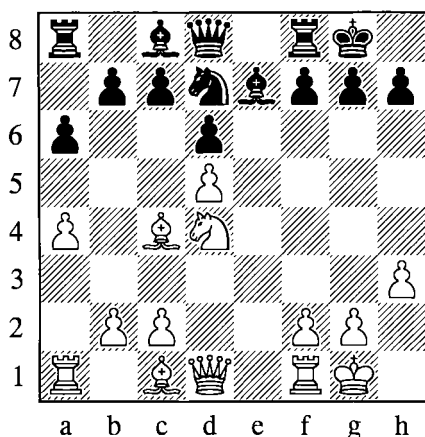
The move played has the aim of getting away from the routine paths of development. If the opportunity arises, Black intends to obtain active queenside play with ...b7-b5.

8.a4 exd4 9.♘xd4 ♘b4

White has temporarily weakened the b4-point, and Black aims to secure full equality after 10...d5.

10.♘d5

This guarantees White a certain spatial plus (after the following forced exchange). In addition, White has a strong knight on d4 while the black knight lacks outposts in the centre. Despite this, White's advantage is insignificant.

10...♘bxd5 11.exd5 ♘d7

From d7 the knight may go to e5 or c5, and on the latter square it will be firmly established if Black plays a preliminary ...a6-a5. White therefore blocks the black a-pawn before doing anything else.

12.a5 ♗f6 13.c3

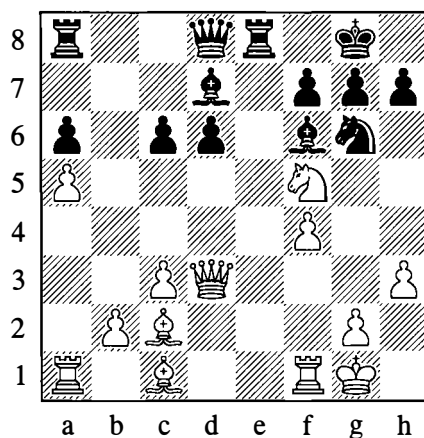
White would gain nothing from 13.♘e6 fxe6 14.dxe6 ♖h8 15.exd7 ♗xd7 16.♗d3 ♗e8.

13...♘e5 14.♗b3 ♖e8 15.♗c2 ♗d7 16.f4 ♘g6

The black knight is forced to abandon the central square e5, but White has achieved this at the cost of weakening the e-file and limiting the mobility of his bishop on c1.

17.♗d3

White's plan now becomes clear. He prepares to complete his development with ♗d2 and then to carry on increasing his initiative on the kingside.

17...c5 18.dxc6 bxc6 19.♘f5**19...♗xf5**

Black is compelled to grant his opponent the advantage of the bishop pair, as 19...d5 is not good; White would continue 20.♘d6 and then 21.♘b7, with advantage.

20.♗xf5 d5 21.♗d2 ♘f8 22.♗d3 c5

Black attempts by means of ...c5-c4 to terminate the attack against his a-pawn and free his rook from defending it. In addition the white pawns on b2 and a5 will be split.

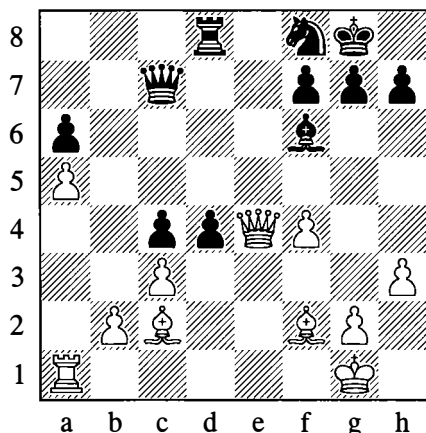
23. ♖fe1

It was worth considering 23. ♖a4, after which Black would have to play precisely to maintain the balance. The correct continuation would be 23... ♖e6 24. f5 c4 25. ♗f3 ♖e4 26. ♕e3 ♝d7!.

23... ♖xe1† 24. ♕xe1 c4 25. ♗e2

Black would answer 25. ♗f3 with 25...d4.

25... ♗c7 26. ♗f3 ♖d8 27. ♕f2 d4 28. ♗e4



Increasing the pressure on the d- and c-pawns. Now 28...d3 is bad on account of 29. ♕b6.

During the game it seemed to Black that the variation 28...dxc3 29. ♕b6 cxb2 30. ♖e1 ♗c8 31. ♕xd8 ♗xd8 32. ♗xc4 ♗xa5 would be fatal on account of 33. ♖e8 ♗a1† 34. ♝h2 b1=♗ 35. ♕xb1 ♗xb1 36. ♗c5, winning for White. And yet after 33... ♗b6†! (instead of 33... ♗a1†?) 34. ♝h2 ♕d4!, Black's position is no worse. In this same variation, 31... ♕xd8!, holding on to the c-pawn, is also very strong.

The final part of the game was played in mutual time trouble which increased with every move.

28...g6?

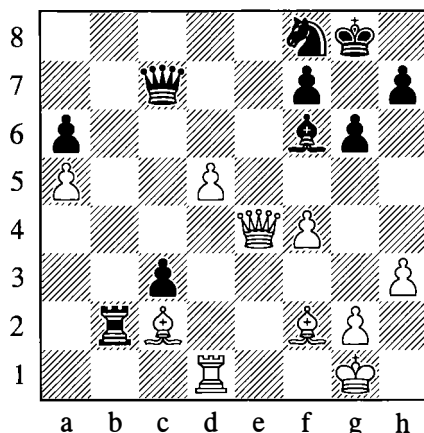
Black frees his knight from the defence of the h-pawn, in order to meet 29. ♕xd4 with 29... ♕xd4 30. cxd4 ♝e6.

The correct line, as indicated above, was 28...dxc3.

29. cxd4 ♖b8 30. d5?

The awkward-looking 30. ♖a2 was the only move enabling White to keep his extra material. Lipnitsky pins all his hopes on the passed d-pawn, disregarding material losses.

30... ♖xb2 31. ♖d1 c3



32. d6?!

White abandons the a5-pawn to no purpose; 32. ♕b6 was better.

32... ♗xa5 33. d7 ♗c7 34. ♗e8 ♕d8

Not 34... ♖xc2, which loses to 35. d8=♗ ♕xd8 36. ♖xd8 ♖c1† 37. ♝h2 ♗xf4† 38. ♕g3 ♗b4 39. ♕d6.

35. ♗e4 ♕f6 36. ♗e8

White assents to repetition of moves, but Black with a pawn more is not satisfied with a draw.

36... ♖b8 37. ♝h1

After 37.♙b3 ♚xb3 38.d8=♞ ♙xd8 39.♞xd8 ♞xd8 40.♞xd8 c2 41.♙e3 ♚xe3 42.♞d2 ♚e2!, Black has good winning chances. But White should have gone into that line all the same, as he now loses by force.

37...♞d8 38.♙a4

There is no other way to defend the d-pawn, but now the advance of the black c-pawn is decisive.

38...c2 39.♞c1 ♞xf4 40.♙e3 ♞xa4

White resigned.

0–1

GAME 14

Tigran Petrosian – Vassily Smyslov

Moscow 1951

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♖f3 ♖f6 4.♗c3 c6 5.e4

By transposition of moves the game has entered one of the sharpest and most interesting variations of the Slav Defence, in which White sacrifices a pawn for the attack.

5...b5 6.e5 ♖d5 7.a4 e6

The strongest continuation. On 7...♙f5, there could follow: 8.axb5 ♖xc3 (or 8...♗b4 9.♙xc4 ♖c2† 10.♗e2 ♖xa1 11.♞a4 cxb5 12.♙xb5† ♙d7 13.e6! fxe6 14.♗e5, with advantage to White) 9.bxc3 cxb5 10.♗g5 e6 11.g4 ♙g6 12.♙g2.

8.axb5 ♖xc3 9.bxc3 cxb5 10.♗g5 ♙b7 11.♞h5 g6!

Best. In the game Furman – Lilienthal from the Baku semi-final, Black played 11...♞d7, to which one possible reply is 12.♗xh7 with the threat of 13.♗f6†.

12.♞g4 ♙e7 13.♙e2

Too slow. However, in the event of 13.h4 h5

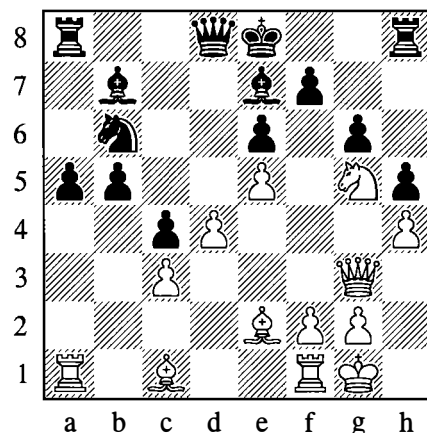
14.♞g3 ♖a6 (but not 14...♗d7?, because of 15.♗xe6!), Black has time to bring his knight via c7 to d5 – after which his position is fully defensible.

13...♗d7 14.h4

If 14.♙f3, then 14...♙xf3 15.♞xf3 0–0.

14...h5 15.♞g3 ♖b6 16.0–0 a5!

The correct decision. It becomes clear that Black's king in the centre is not threatened by anything for the moment, while on the queenside a formidable array of passed pawns is taking shape for him. A curious fact is that an analogous position arose in the game Geller – Flohr in the same round of the tournament.



a good many difficulties. It is already hard to demonstrate a wholly satisfactory defence for Black.

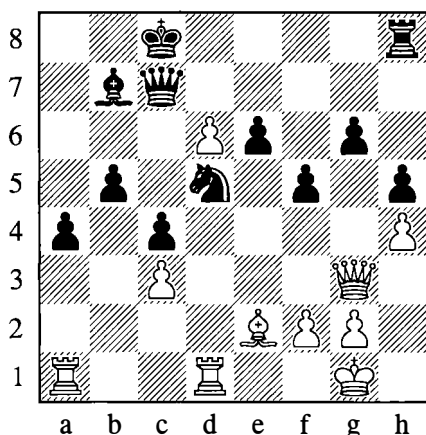
20. ♖g5!

A powerful move that forces the exchange of dark-squared bishops, after which a number of weaknesses arise in the black camp.

20... ♗xg5 21. ♖xg5 a4 22. ♖g3 f5 23. ♜d6† ♗xd6

The exchange sacrifice is Black's best chance, as otherwise after 24. ♜xb5 his position will be hopeless.

24. exd6



24... f4?

The decisive mistake. More chances of saving the game were offered by 24... ♖g7!, and if 25. ♗f3 then 25... ♗d8 (but not 25... ♜xc3, which would be met by 26. d7†!).

25. ♖xg6 ♖xd6 26. ♗f3 ♗c6 27. ♗e1 ♗e8 28. ♗xd5 ♖xd5 29. ♗ad1!

White forces his opponent to go into a lost endgame.

29... ♖f5 30. ♖xf5 exf5 31. ♗xe8† ♗xe8 32. f3 ♜c7 33. ♜f2 ♜b6 34. ♜e2 ♜a5 35. ♗b1 a3 36. ♜d2 b4

If 36... ♜a4, then 37. ♗b4† ♜a5 38. ♜c2, followed by ♜c2-b1-a2 and ♗b4-b1-e1.

37. ♜xb4† ♜a4 38. ♜c3 a2 39. ♗a1 ♜a3 40. ♜xc4!

This move settles the outcome of the struggle at once.

40... ♜b2

In this position, which is hopeless for Black, the game was adjourned.

41. ♗d1 a1=♖ 42. ♗xa1 ♜xa1 43. b5

In spite of his extra bishop, Black's position is lost because of the dangerous enemy passed pawn and the distance between his own king and the pawns on the kingside. Black resigned after several more moves.

...1-0

GAME 15

Vladimir Simagin – Tigran Petrosian

Moscow 1951

1. d4 ♜f6 2. c4 e6 3. ♜c3 d5 4. ♜f3 ♗e7 5. e3

On the 4th or 5th move, ♗g5 is more popular, although it leads to extensively studied variations. Simagin tries to avoid them.

5...0-0 6. ♗d3 c5 7.0-0 cxd4 8. exd4 dxc4 9. ♗xc4

The game has transposed to a well-known position from the Queen's Gambit Accepted, but with an extra tempo for Black.

9...a6

Black plays to develop his bishop on the h1-a8 diagonal. Combined with a knight on d5, this will give him a good game. However, if White had found the right continuation at move 13, Black's plan would have proved unrealizable. The customary sequence, ... ♜b8-d7-b6-d5 and ... ♗d7, deserved preference.

10. ♖e2

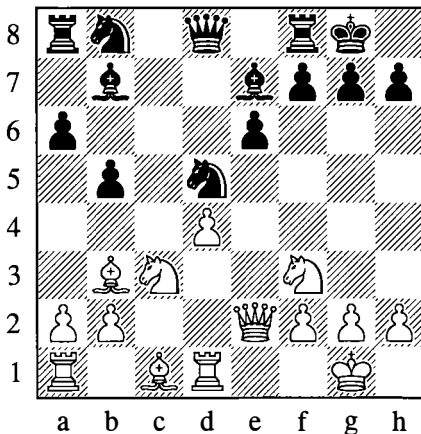
In analogous positions White sometimes prevents ...b7-b5 by playing a2-a4, not fearing the weakening of the b4-point.

10...b5 11. ♖b3

Where should the bishop retreat – to b3 or d3? In the present case, the bishop's position on b3 is most in keeping with White's tenth move. After 11. ♖d3, there would be no obstacle to Black's deployment of his pieces on the lines envisaged by his ninth.

11... ♖b7 12. ♖d1 ♖d5

Black fails to equalize with 12... ♖bd7 on account of 13.d5, or with 12...b4 13. ♖a4 ♖a5, when play could continue: 14. ♖g5 ♖bd7 15. ♖e5 ♖ad8 16. ♖ac1 with strong pressure.

**13. ♖e4**

After this superficial though natural-seeming move, Black easily finishes his development and achieves a good game thanks to his possession of the d5-point.

His backwardness in development and the undefended state of his bishop on b7 could have been exploited by 13. ♖e4!. Then 13... ♖xc3 14. ♖xb7 would be bad for Black after either 14... ♖xd1 15. ♖xa8 or 14... ♖e2† 15. ♖f1 ♖xc1 16. ♖xa8. He would have to

settle for 13... ♖d7 14. ♖c2 g6 15. ♖g4, which still leaves White with the better chances.

13... ♖d7 14. ♖e5 ♖c8

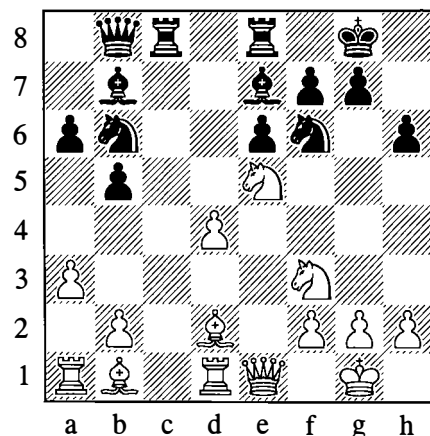
In the event of 14... ♖c7 Black didn't like 15. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 16. ♖g5, when after the exchange of bishops the c5-square is weakened.

15. ♖d2 ♖7f6 16. ♖g5?

Striving for an attack, White induces a weakening of his opponent's kingside – but this turns out to be immaterial. After 16. ♖g3 White would likewise have few attacking chances. The right continuation was therefore 16. ♖c5, forcing the exchange of one of the black bishops.

16...h6 17. ♖g3 ♖b6 18. ♖e1 ♖d6 19.a3

White could have taken advantage of the less than ideal position of the black queen by playing 19. ♖d3 followed by 20. ♖fe5. Instead, striving only for an attack on the king, he goes in for some artificial manoeuvres and fails to hinder Black's plan – which consists of exchanging the light-squared bishops and then occupying the squares d5 and c4 with his pieces.

19... ♖fe8 20. ♖a2 ♖b8 21. ♖b1 ♖b6**22.h4?**

This weakening will prove decisive later. White should have avoided creating any new weaknesses in his position.

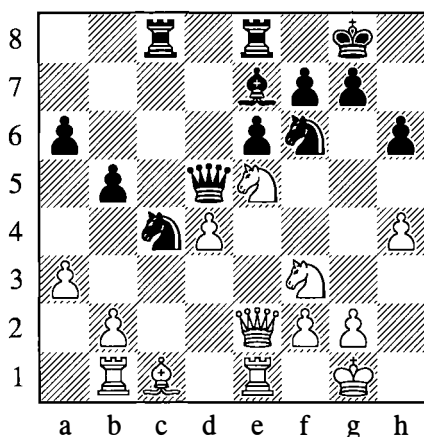
22...♖c4 23.♙c1

White has to incarcerate his rook on a1, as the position after 23.♖xc4 ♙xf3 would clearly be hopeless for him.

23...♜a8 24.♞e2 ♙e4 25.♞e1?

He had to preserve the light-squared bishops by playing 25.♙a2, although after 25...♖d6 Black's position would be preferable.

25...♙xb1 26.♞xb1 ♜d5



27.g4?

Even though Black's strategy has triumphed, there was no reason at all for this move which was clearly prompted by desperation.

The right course was to play 27.♙f4 connecting the rooks, and only afterwards to threaten an advance with g2-g4.

27...♖xe5 28.♖xe5 ♖d7!

Simplest. Black endeavours to exchange some more pieces, after which the weakness of the white pawns will tell. He could also perfectly well have played 28...♞xd4.

29.♞f3

The exchange of queens doesn't save White. It would have been better to play 29.♖f3, maintaining material equality, albeit with a bad position. Now within just a few moves Black achieves an overwhelming positional and material plus.

29...♖xe5 30.♞xd5 exd5 31.dxe5 ♙xh4 32.♞e2 f6 33.e6

If 33.♙f4, then 33...♞c4 is decisive. Black now wins a second pawn, after which the outcome of the game is already clear.

33...♞c6 34.♙e3 ♞exe6 35.♞d2 ♞c4 36.♞xd5 ♞xg4† 37.♖f1 ♙g5 38.♙xg5 ♞xg5 39.♞xg5 fxg5 40.♞d1 ♞c6 41.♞d7 ♖h7 42.♞a7 ♖g6 43.b3 g4 44.a4 bxa4 45.bxa4 h5 46.a5 ♞f6 47.♖g2 h4 48.♞b7 ♖h6 49.♞b6 ♖h5 50.♖g1 h3 51.♞b7 g6 52.♞b4 ♞f5 53.♞a4 g5 54.♞a2 ♞f3

White resigned.

0-1

Chapter 3

1952-1953

On the strength of his result in the 19th USSR Championship, Petrosian gained the right to participate in the Interzonal Tournament. This right had also been earned by Kotov, Geller, Taimanov and Averbakh. Only Kotov among the Soviet players was a hardened veteran of international chess battles; in Geller's case, the Stockholm tournament was his fourth contest abroad.

Petrosian had so far played in only one international championship – the Maroczy Memorial Tournament, held in the spring of 1952 in Budapest. It was at that tournament that the international public began to be acquainted with Tigran. He didn't finish particularly high, but the "Black Panther" nickname says a good deal. Genuine connoisseurs saw the many-sidedness of this young player's talent, his subtle understanding of the game.

And so, to the Interzonal. As Salo Flohr recalls:

Some "pundits" considered that sending this young chess contingent to Stockholm was rather a risky experiment. Many different opinions were expressed as to what the outcome of the tournament would be. "One of our five will get into the top five places," the sceptics proclaimed. "No, two or three ought to get there," the realists retorted. "Four of our players will finish at the top," an optimist asserted; while an enthusiast dreamed, but didn't say out loud: "Won't it be great if *all* our players are in the top five!" And the reality exceeded the most optimistic expectations...

To some extent, the solemn closing ceremony called to mind an act of capitulation before the victors. To those present it was rather a bore to hear Folke Rogard announce in monotonous vein, "First place: Kotov, Soviet Union! Second and third places: Taimanov and Petrosian, Soviet Union! Fourth place: Geller, Soviet Union! Fifth place: Averbakh, Soviet Union!"

The Swedes and Americans, the English and Yugoslavs, the Dutch and Argentinians politely applauded the winners, but the majority were scarcely thrilled at this tournament result.

Petrosian had won seven games without losing a single one; and he had drawn thirteen. He had proved to himself, not without a feeling of pleasant surprise, that he could be the master of his own destiny in such a crucial contest. Is there any need to say how happy Tigran was at realizing his dream?

Don't forget that a mere three years before, he had been a newcomer to the national Championship who stood in awe of the Grandmasters; but now he had not only become a Grandmaster himself but even joined that chess elite from whose midst the pretender to the throne was to emerge.

GAME 16

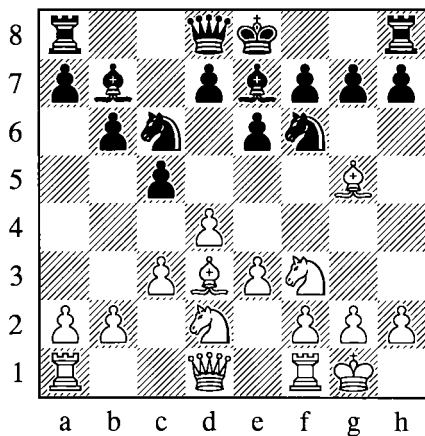
Tigran Petrosian – Harry Golombek

Stockholm 1952

1. ♖f3 ♜f6 2. d4 b6 3. ♙g5

While bringing White no particular advantages, this rare variation of the Queen's Pawn Opening differs favourably from the Colle System in that the bishop is developed in an active position, instead of remaining for a long time on c1.

3... ♙b7 4. e3 c5 5. ♙d3 ♜c6 6. c3 e6 7. ♜bd2 ♙e7 8. 0–0



8...d5

Black could have obtained a good position with 8...cxd4 9. exd4 ♜d5. After 8...d5 White gains some advantage.

9. ♙e2 0–0 10. ♙ad1 ♙c7 11. ♙f4

Before playing e3–e4 White draws the black queen into an unfavourable position.

11... ♙d6

If 11... ♙d7 then 12. ♜e5 is unpleasant, as after 12... ♜xe5 13. dxe5 Black cannot play 13... ♜e4.

12. ♙xd6 ♙xd6 13. e4 dxe4

In view of the threatened e4–e5, the capture is obligatory.

14. ♜xe4 ♜xe4

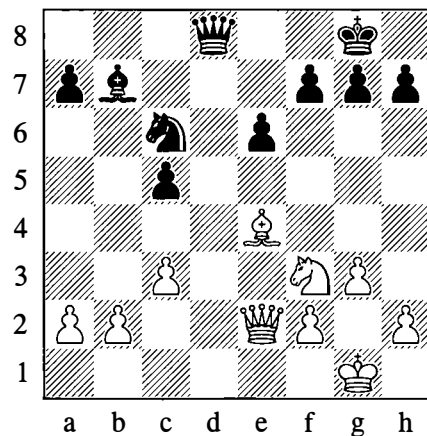
The cautious 14... ♙e7 was probably better.

Now after 15. ♙xe4 Black would have had to decide on the scarcely attractive 15...g6, seeing that the alternative is even worse: 15...f5 16. ♙e2 cxd4 17. ♙c4 ♙ae8 18. ♜xd4, with a clear plus for White.

15. ♙xe4

This move too gives White a slight but quite tangible advantage. Black has to allow a weakening of his queenside, since after 15...cxd4 16. ♜xd4 ♜xd4 17. ♙xd4 ♙c7 18. ♙xb7 ♙xb7 19. ♙fd1 White would gain possession of the open d-file.

15... ♙e7 16. dxc5 bxc5 17. ♙d2 ♙fd8 18. ♙fd1 ♙xd2 19. ♙xd2 ♙d8 20. ♙xd8† ♙xd8 21. g3



Thanks to the weakness of the c5-pawn, White has a clear advantage.

21...g6 22. ♙e3 ♙d1† 23. ♙g2 ♙d6 24. ♜d2 ♜a5 25. ♙xb7 ♜xb7 26. ♜e4 ♙e7?

It isn't clear why Black didn't play 26... ♙e5. He could only have continued the fight successfully by defending actively. He now lands in a difficult situation.

27.h4 ♖g7 28.c4

White squeezes all he can out of the position. By fixing the pawn on c5, he condemns the black knight to the passive role of this pawn's guard.

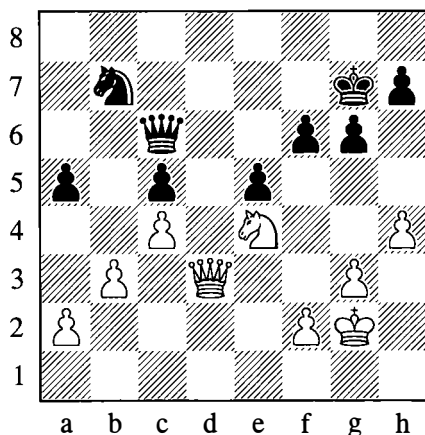
28...a5 29.♖c3† f6

A forced weakening.

30.b3 e5?

He ought to have held back from this move and kept to waiting tactics, after first playing ...h7-h5 which is useful for the defence. The weakness of d5 now proves fatal.

31.♖e3 ♖c7 32.♖d3 ♖c6



33.♖d5! ♖xd5

Leading to a lost position. But Black should not be censured for this move, as after 33...♖c7 the powerful centralized position of White's pieces, and the many weaknesses in Black's camp, would still have determined the outcome of the struggle.

34.cxd5 ♙f7 35.♘d2 f5?

A more tenacious move was 35...♘d6.

36.♘c4 ♙f6 37.f3 e4?

The final error. A better move was 37...h5, after which White would still have a lot of work to do to exploit his positional advantage.

38.fxe4 fxe4 39.g4 h5 40.♙g3 h×g4

In this position the game was adjourned, and Black resigned without resuming. It's easy to see that after 41.♙xg4 e3 42.♘xe3 ♙e5 43.♙g5 White wins.

1-0

GAME 17

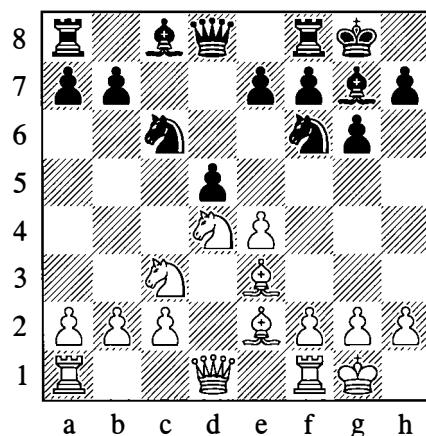
Herman Pilnik – Tigran Petrosian

Stockholm 1952

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.♘c3

This continuation doesn't give Black any particular difficulties. The more logical course is 5.c4, with pressure against d5.

5...♙g7 6.♙e3 ♘f6 7.♙e2 0-0 8.0-0 d5



Now Black completely equalizes.

9.♘xc6 bxc6 10.exd5 cxd5 11.♙d4

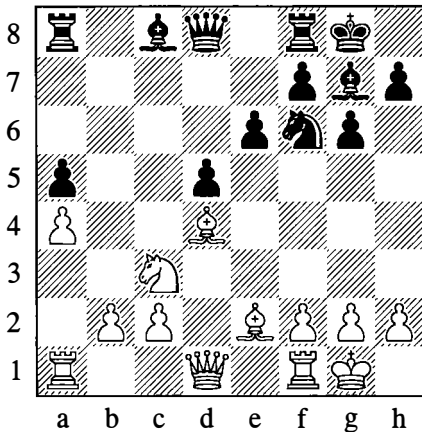
White's plan becomes clear. By advancing his a-pawn he aims to create play on the queenside, where Black's pawn on a7 may in some circumstances prove weak.

In heading for this position, White underrates the strength of Black's centre pawns.

11...e6 12.a4 a5!

Black thought for a long time about this committal move, seeing that by handing over the b5-point he is facilitating White's queenside play.

However, Black now acquires the possibility to advance his centre pawns in more comfortable conditions, since his a-pawn is less exposed to attack on a5 than it would be on a7 or a6.

**13.d6 14.c3**

Black would answer 14...e5 with 14...c8.

14...d4!

The bishop on d4 is occupying a very strong post. Black's attempt to exchange it is therefore understandable.

15.e3

Evidently the Argentinian Grandmaster is still dreaming of an opening advantage. However, White's last move gives Black the chance to create good play in the centre. It was essential to play 15.f4.

15...e8 16.e1 b8

Refraining temporarily from his pawn advance in the centre, Black intends to exchange off the knights and light-squared bishops, thereby liquidating White's play that

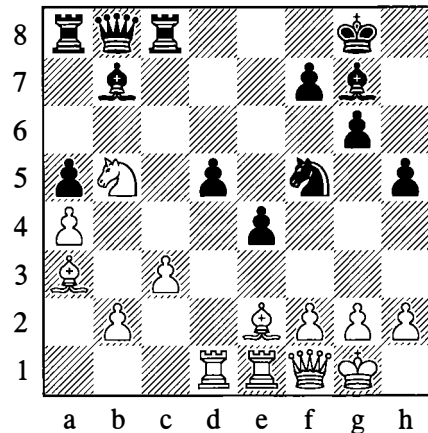
is based on exploiting the active position of his knight on b5.

17.d3

Pilnik aims to fortify the knight on b5 with all his might in order to maintain the balance. If an exchange of minor pieces occurs, then Black, who has the advantage in the centre, will exert pressure along the open b-file.

17...d6 18.e2 e5

The start of Black's central offensive. White should now have consented to exchange minor pieces and settle for somewhat the worse position after 19.dxd6 exd3 20.exd3 exd6.

19.f1 e4 20.e2 f5 21.c5 c8 22.a3 h5 23.ad1 b7**24.g4**

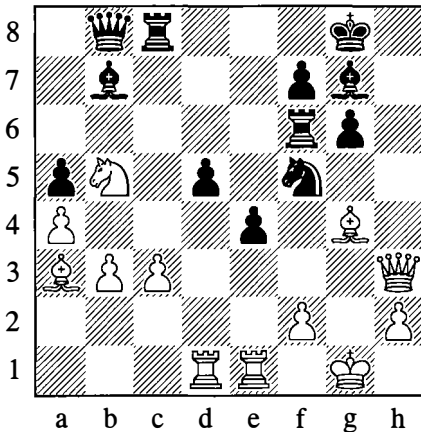
As a result of the foregoing play, White's pieces have ended up in bad positions. Pilnik strives to activate his game, even though this leads to a palpable weakening of the white kingside.

24...hxg4 25.xg4 a6!

This move is essential to prevent 26.xf5 gxf5 27.d6. In addition, the rook on the sixth rank is brought across to the other wing.

26. ♖h3 ♜f6

Better 26...♖f4, after which White wouldn't be able to bring his bishop on a3 into play. For example 27.b3 ♜xc3, and now 28.♟xc3 ♜xc3 followed by 29...♖xg4†, or 28.♜xf5 gxf5 29.♟xc3 ♜g6† 30.♙h1 ♜xc3 31.♖xc3 d4.

27.b3**27...♖f4?**

Acutely short of time, Black commits an error allowing White to bring his bishop on a3 into the game with tempo. The right move was 27...♜c6.

28. ♜c1 ♖e5 29. ♟d4 ♜c7 30. ♜g5?

White too has started playing fast in an attempt to exploit Black's time trouble, counting on emerging the exchange up after 30...♟xd4 31.♜xf6 ♖xf6 32.cxd4. However, Black has a zwischenzug at his disposal.

A better move was 30.f4.

30...♟xd4 31. ♜xf6 ♟f3† 32. ♖xf3 ♜xf6 33. ♖g3 ♜xc3 34. ♜e3

A desperate bid to complicate the game. The ending after a queen exchange would also be dismal for White.

34...♜c7 35.f4 ♖e7 36.f5 g5

An immediate 36...d4 would have decided the game more quickly.

37. ♜e2 ♖e5 38. ♖g2 d4 39. h4 e3

Ordinarily Black would not have decided to push his pawns when in dire time trouble; but when there are just a few moments left before your flag drops, you sometimes *do* take decisions that you wouldn't resolve on if you had some time for thinking – that is, time for vacillation and hesitancy, as we might call it in such cases.

40. ♜f3 ♜xf3

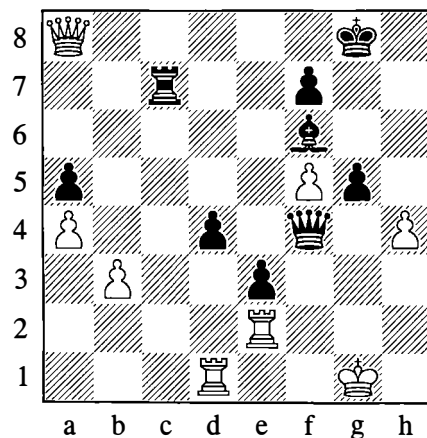
After 40...d3 White would have to resign at once.

41. ♖xf3

For the past 15 moves Black hadn't had time to keep the score of the game, and as he wasn't sure that he had reached the time control, he made his 41st move in a flash.

41...♖f4?

After this, White achieves a draw; 41...gxh4 would have preserved every chance of winning.

42. ♖a8†

Arriving back at my room and setting up the position, I noticed to my horror that the

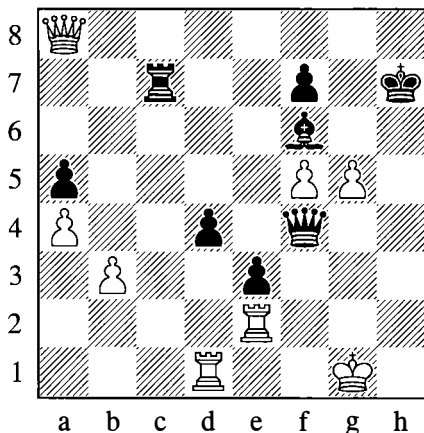
natural 42...♔g7 would lead to a lost position after 43.hxg5 ♙xg5 44.♖f1, since 44...d3 45.♖xf4 dxe2 fails to 46.f6†.

It remained to search for other possibilities of defence by means of 42...♔h7, which at first sight looks even worse, as after 43.hxg5 ♙xg5 44.♖f1 d3 45.♖h2† ♜xh2† 46.♔xh2 e2 47.♖h1 White wins.

Everyone who called in on me heard me out with a sceptical smile, as I bemoaned the calamity that had befallen me. No one wanted to believe that such a drastic upheaval in the state of the position – from absolutely won, to critical – could have been “achieved” without any gross blunders being made. Salo Flohr arrived. He lectured me as the others had done, but when we set about analysing, he too failed to find an adequate defence for Black. After a little more perfunctory grumbling, he was about to leave, making the parting remark that such a position *couldn't* be lost. Then there was a careless sweep of his arm, and a piece was pushed away from its square. When Salomon Mikhailovich had shut the door behind him, I realized that my rook was *en prise*, and – like a sudden illumination – here was a draw! To this day I have always been unsure whether Flohr had seen the strength of ...♖c2 or whether he displaced the piece by accident.

On the day of resumption, there followed:

42...♔h7 43.hxg5



43...♖c2!

This move took Pilnik by surprise.

44.♜h1† ♔g8 45.♜a8† ♔h7

With a draw.

½–½

GAME 18

Laszlo Szabo – Tigran Petrosian

Stockholm 1952

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6

In the past few years, Black has been linking this fifth move to a plan in which Isaak Boleslavsky's ideas in the Sicilian are developed further.

6.f4

The immediate advance in the centre is recognized as White's strongest counter to Black's system of play.

6...♜c7

This is probably rather subtler than 6...e5. Black retains the option of going into a Scheveningen or a Dragon set-up.

7.♙e2

More often 7.♙d3 is played.

7...e5 8.♘f3 ♙e6 9.f5

The exchange of light-squared bishops which this move compels is favourable to White. At the same time the d5-point is weakened, and a white pawn push to g5 could have lamentable results for his opponent. Black's counterplay has to be based on utilizing the c-file and breaking with ...d6-d5 if an opportunity offers.

9...♙c4 10.♙g5 ♘bd7 11.♘d2 ♙xe2

It was worth considering 11...b5.

12. ♖xe2 ♜c8 13. a3

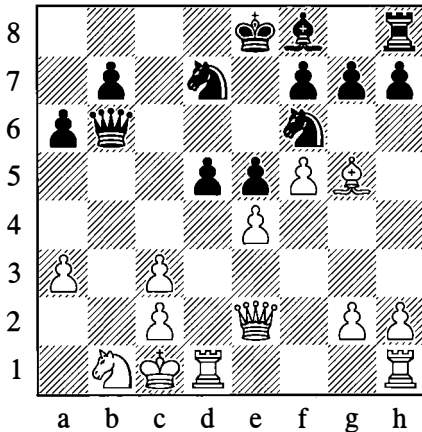
It is hard to call this move an active one. White's position had no need of defensive measures; 13. ♙xf6 ♜xf6 14. 0-0-0, with the threat of ♜d2-f1-e3, would have been the logical outcome of his strategy.

13... ♜b6 14. 0-0-0?

White underestimates the consequences of the standard exchange sacrifice on c3. The right move was 14. ♖b1.

14... ♜xc3

To resolve on this sacrifice in his state of backward development, Black had to calculate the variation 15. bxc3 d5 16. ♜b1 (the only move, as you can easily verify) 16... dxe4, after which he easily completes his development and has an obvious plus, thanks to the weakness of White's queenside and the bad position of the knight on b1.

15. bxc3 d5! 16. ♜b1**16... ♜xe4?**

As mentioned above, 16... dxe4 is correct.

17. ♜xd5 ♜xg5

Black realized that he could not play 17... ♜xb1† 18. ♜xb1 ♜xc3† 19. ♜b2 ♜xe2 20. ♜e1 f6 21. ♙e3.

18. h4 ♙c5

On 18... ♙e7, White would obtain a won position with 19. ♜hd1. For example: 19... ♜f6 20. ♜xe5 ♜ge4 21. ♜xe4 ♜xe4 22. ♜xe4, or 19... ♜c5 20. ♜xe5 with numerous threats. The main trouble for Black is not that he is the exchange down (seeing that the weakness of the white pawns and the insecure enemy king position give him adequate counterplay) but the difficulty he has in finishing his development.

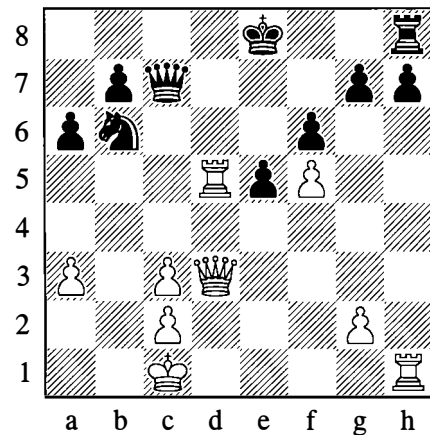
At this point White recoils from working out the complicated variations after 19. ♜xe5† and chooses a simple continuation that secures him a material plus.

19. hxcg5 ♙c3† 20. ♜d2 ♙xg5 21. ♜d3!

The correct move, forcing the black queen to abandon its active post on b6. After 21. ♜c4 ♜c6 22. ♜xc6 bxc6 23. ♙a5 ♜e7 with 24... ♜d8 to follow, or 21. ♜h3 f6 22. ♜hd3 ♜c5 23. ♜d8† ♜xd8 24. ♜xd8† ♜xd8, Black would retain good chances of a successful defence.

21... ♜c7 22. ♜d1 ♙xd2

Black can't allow the white knight onto e4.

23. ♜xd2 f6 24. ♜c1 ♜b6**25. ♜d6**

With the exchange to the good, it was hard to decide on 25.♖hd1. And yet that move would have given White a dangerous attack, as we can see from the variation 25...♜xd5 26.♞xd5 ♜f8 27.♞e6† ♞e7 28.♞c8† ♜f7 29.♞c4† ♜e8 30.♞d5, when 31.♞c5 is threatened; or 26...♞e7 27.♞c4. (After 26...♞c8 27.♞d6 White maintains a number of threats, the chief one being to bring his rook to c5.) Considering that at this stage Black was suffering from acute time shortage, 25.♖hd1 must be acknowledged as the right move.

25...0–0 26.♞d1?

The black knight on b6 is guarding the important points d7 and d5, as well as threatening an unpleasant sortie to c4 in some circumstances. For that reason the correct move was 26.♖h4!. White could then answer 26...♞c5 with 27.♖b4. Now Black wins a second pawn for the exchange and stands better.

26...♞c5 27.♞d8 ♞xa3† 28.♜b1 h5!

Opening up a loophole for the king and keeping the white g- and f-pawns apart, which is of crucial importance in the endgame. Meanwhile Black threatens to win with 29...♜a4!.

29.♞xf8† ♞xf8 30.♞e4

If (as the further course of the game shows) White was aiming to exchange queens, he should have played 30.♞d8. The exchange later takes place in a less favourable situation for him.

30...♞e7 31.♞b4 ♞c7

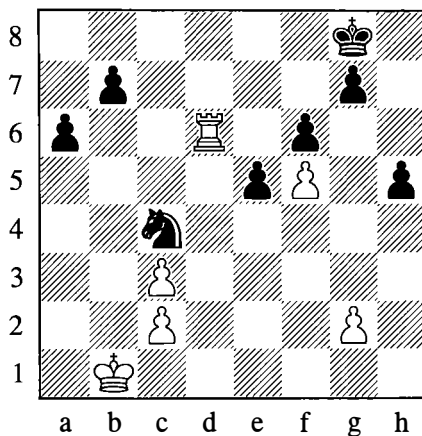
Of course there is no sense in straightening out White's pawns.

32.♞d6?

He should have kept the queens on the board at all costs. In the endgame White cannot

withstand the attack on his g- and h-pawns. The purposefulness of Black's 28th move is now clear.

32...♞xd6 33.♞xd6 ♜c4



The knight commences its raid on White's pawns.

34.♞d7 b5 35.♞a7

With passive play White cannot save himself, as Black's threats on the kingside are too dangerous.

35...♜e3 36.♞xa6 ♜xg2 37.♜c1

After 37.♞b6, Black would win as follows: 37...h4 38.♞xb5 h3 39.♜a2 e4 40.c4 e3 41.c5 e2 42.♞b1 e1=♞ 43.♞xe1 ♜xe1 44.c6 h2, or 39.♞d5 e4 40.♜c1 e3.

37...h4 38.♜d2 h3

Black gives up the h-pawn but gains the f5-pawn in return. After stationing his knight on d6, he wins easily by advancing his passed pawns.

39.♞a1 ♜h4 40.c4 bxc4 41.♞h1

The immediate 41.♜c3 would transpose, as 41...♜xf5 42.♜xc4 ♜g3 43.♜d5 h2 44.c4 h1=♞ 45.♞xh1 ♜xh1 46.c5 ♜g3 47.c6 ♜f5 wins all the same.

41...♖xf5 42.♙c3 ♘d6 43.♞xh3 ♜f7
44.♞h7 f5 45.♙b4 f4 46.♙c5 f3! 47.♞h1

On 47.♙xd6, Black would conclude the struggle with 47...f2 48.♞h1 e4 49.♞f1 e3 50.♙d5 ♜g8 and 51...e2.

47...e4

White resigned.

0-1

For the marathon thirty-round Candidates Tournament, Petrosian prepared himself according to a special programme. He declined the exhausting burden of playing in the USSR Championship this time round, preferring quite a prestigious international tournament in Bucharest, in which five Soviet players were taking part. They formed the top five finishers. First prize went to Tolush (he had been included in the delegation on the strength of his Soviet Championship result); and FIDE awarded him the International Grandmaster title. Petrosian took second prize ahead of Smyslov, Boleslavsky and Spassky.

GAME 19

Zdravko Milev – Tigran Petrosian

Bucharest 1953

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5
d6 6.♙g2 g6 7.e4 ♙g7

This kind of set-up, which leads to sharp play, is adopted quite frequently by Soviet masters. The strongest plan for White would be to bring a knight to c4. To this end he should have played 7.♘c3 ♙g7 8.♘f3 0-0 9.0-0, followed by 10.♘d2.

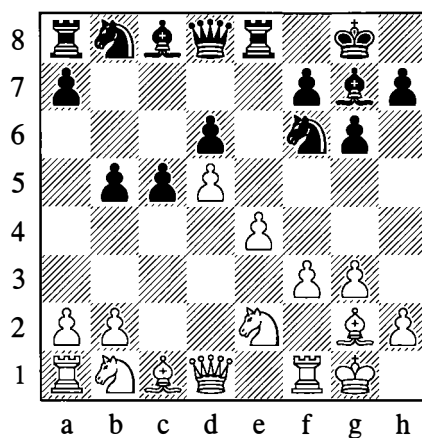
8.♘e2 0-0 9.0-0

Better 9.♘bc3, as Black now carries out the advance ...b7-b5 unhindered.

9...♞e8 10.f3

Here again 10.♘bc3 was more to the point, even though Black could still reply 10...b5.

10...b5



11.a4

This move is usually made in order to secure the c4-square for a knight. In the present position it not only fails in this aim but helps the development of Black's initiative; the bishop acquires an outlet via a6, from where it will exert strong pressure, and after ...♘b8-d7-e5 the black knight will inevitably arrive on d3. White should have played 11.♞c2.

11...b4 12.♞e1 ♘bd7 13.♘f4

The attempt to transfer a knight to c4 would easily be thwarted – for instance 13.♘d2 ♙a6 14.♞c2 ♘e5, with a clear plus.

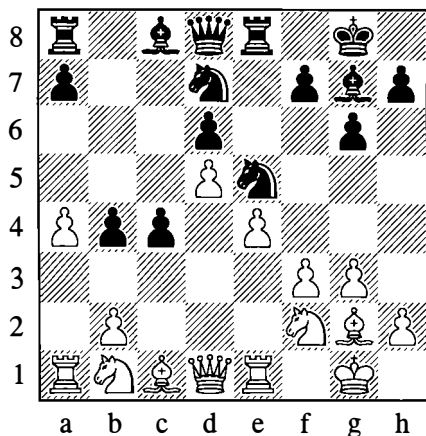
13...♘e5 14.♘d3

It's hard for White to finish his development. On 14.b3, a noteworthy variation is possible: 14...g5 15.♘e2 g4 16.f4 ♘f3†, and Black wins.

14...♘fd7

Not as strong as 14...♘xd3 15.♞xd3 ♘d7.

15.♘f2 c4



Exploiting White's backwardness in development, Black sacrifices a pawn with the result that the c-file is opened and the square c5 is freed for his knight; combined with the pressure on the diagonals a1-h8 and f1-a6, this will put White in a difficult situation. He would do better to decline the sacrifice and play 16.♙e3.

16.f4 ♘d3 17.♘xd3 cxd3 18.♖xd3 ♘c5
19.♗d1 ♙a6 20.♙f1

The only way to stop the knight from invading on d3.

20...♘xe4 21.♙xa6 ♖b6† 22.♙e3 ♖xa6
23.♙d4

Hastening White's loss.

23...♙xd4† 24.♖xd4 ♘xg3 25.♘c3 bxc3
26.hxg3 c2 27.♙f2 ♖ac8 28.♙e3 ♖xe3
29.♖xe3 ♖c4

White resigned.

0-1

GAME 20

Octavio Troianescu – Tigran Petrosian

Bucharest 1953

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d3 ♘c6 4.♘bd2 g6 5.g3
♙g7 6.♙g2 e6 7.0-0 ♘ge7 8.♙e1 0-0 9.c3

White has chosen a formation that recalls a King's Indian Defence with colours reversed.

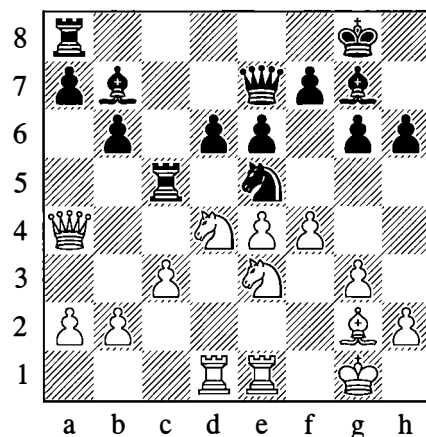
9...b6 10.♘f1 ♙a6 11.d4 cxd4 12.♘xd4

On 12.cxd4 Black was intending 12...e5, with complex play.

12...♘e5

Better 12...♘xd4 13.cxd4 ♖d7.

13.♙g5 h6 14.♖a4 ♙b7 15.♙xe7 ♖xe7
16.♙ad1 ♖fc8 17.♘e3 ♖c5 18.f4



18...♘c6?

Black ought to have gone in for the complications that arise from 18...b5. I rejected this because of 19.♘xb5 ♙c6 20.fxe5 ♙xb5 (20...♙xe5 21.c4 a6 22.b4 axb4 23.♖c2 is bad for Black) 21.exd6 ♙xa4 22.dxe7 ♙xd1 23.♖xd1, which I assessed in White's favour. However, in this line 20...♖xe5 dispels all the dangers, for example 21.♖a3 ♖xb5 22.♖xd6 ♖b7, or 21.c4 a6.

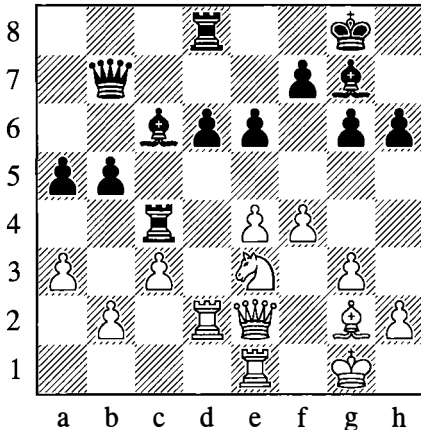
A stronger reply to 18...b5 is 19.♖b3, but even then, after 19...♘d7 20.♘b5 ♖b8, Black has counter-chances.

19.♘xc6?

Now Black can breathe freely. After 19.♘b3 b5 20.♖a3 b4 21.♖a4! (better than 21.cxb4 ♖b5 22.♘c2 a5) 21...bxc3 22.♘xc5 dxc5 23.e5! he would have been in a grave situation.

19...♙xc6 20.♖c2 ♖d8 21.♖e2 ♖b7 22.♘c2 b5 23.♖d2 ♖c4 24.a3 a5 25.♘e3

By keeping to his waiting tactics, White allows an exchange sacrifice.



25...♙xe4! 26.♙xe4 ♙xe4

With a pawn and a powerful bishop for a rook, Black has fully adequate compensation for the exchange.

27.♘c2 d5 28.♘d4?

At this point White should have had a think about the safety of his king and played 28.h3 followed by 29.♘h2. As the game goes, although he does acquire a passed a-pawn, his knight's central outpost is not maintained and he hands over the important c-file to his opponent.

28...b4! 29.cxb4 axb4 30.a4 ♖a7 31.♖f2 ♖c8!

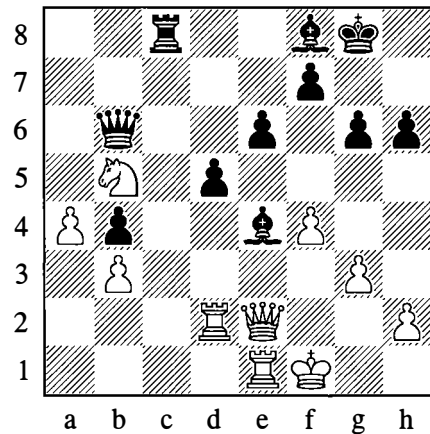
A mistake would be 31...♖xa4 32.♘e6 fxe6 33.♖xe4.

32.b3 ♙f8

The tempting 32...♖c3 leads, after 33.♘b5 ♖xf2† 34.♘xf2 ♖xb3 35.a5, to a position where only White has chances of success.

Now Black threatens 33...♙c5 followed by ...f7-f6 and ...e6-e5.

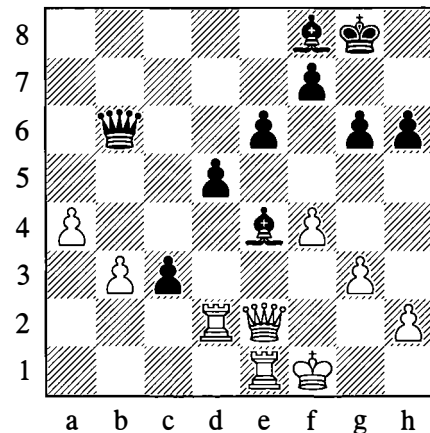
33.♘b5 ♖a6 34.♖e2 ♖b6† 35.♘f1



35...♖c3!

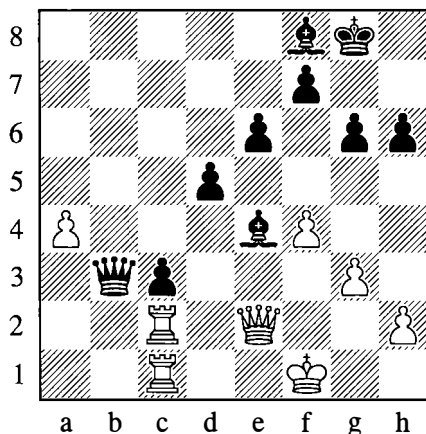
The second exchange sacrifice cements Black's advantage.

36.♘xc3 bxc3



37.♖c2

Against 37.♖d3, Black was planning 37...♙f5 38.g4 (38.♗g2 is no better, on account of the simple 38...♖xb3) 38...♙xd3 39.♖xd3 ♖xb3 40.f5 ♖xa4 41.fxe6 ♖f4†, followed by 42...♖xg4† and 43...fxe6.

37...♖xb3 38.♖ec1

38...♙b4! 39.g4 ♙xc2 40.♖xc2 ♖xa4

In this position the game was adjourned.

41.f5 exf5! 42.gxf5 g5 43.h4

The somewhat better 43.♖d3 could have done no more than drag out White's resistance.

43...♙c5! 44.hxg5 ♖f4† 45.♗e1 ♖g3† 46.♗d1 ♖g1† 47.♖e1 ♖xe1† 48.♗xe1 hxg5 49.♗e2 ♙d4! 50.♖a2 ♗g7 51.♗d3 ♙e5! 52.♖a5 ♗f6 53.♖xd5 ♗xf5 54.♗e3 f6 55.♖c5 ♗g4 56.♖c4† ♗g3 57.♗e4 g4

White resigned.

0-1

And now to the Candidates Tournament in Zurich. The young Petrosian, full of *joie de vivre*, has received the title of Grandmaster for his successes in the Interzonal Tournament and is already battling on equal terms with the elite of the chess world. After sharing 5th-7th places at the end of the first cycle, he finishes

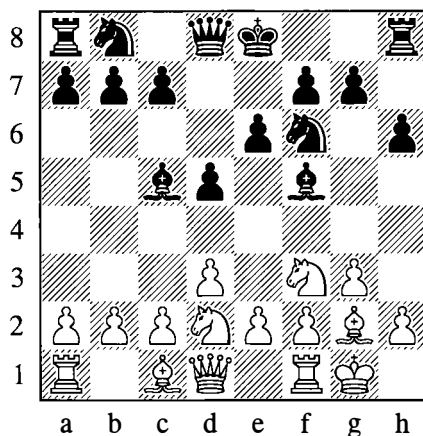
the tournament in fifth place on his own. A splendid achievement on which to build in future! But Smyslov is the tournament winner. Reshevsky, who had sat on the leader's tail for a long time, failed to endure the competition and was caught up by Keres and Bronstein.

GAME 21**Tigran Petrosian – Max Euwe**

Zurich 1953

1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.g3 d5 3.♙g2 ♙f5 4.d3

Bearing in mind that Max Euwe is unsure of himself when handling the white side of the King's Indian Defence, I decided to adopt this formation with colours reversed.

4...e6 5.♗bd2 h6 6.0-0 ♙c5**7.♖e1**

An immediate 7.e4 would be more energetic. The variations 7...dxe4 8.dxe4 ♖xe4 9.♗h4 and 8...♙xe4 9.♗xe4 ♖xe4 10.♖xd8† ♗xd8 11.♗e5 demonstrate the danger Black faces if he accepts the sacrifice of the e4-pawn.

In the case of 7...dxe4 8.dxe4 ♙h7, the position of the bishop on c5 is scarcely effective; while the one on h7, which has failed

in its task of holding up e2-e4, is hampered by the white pawn.

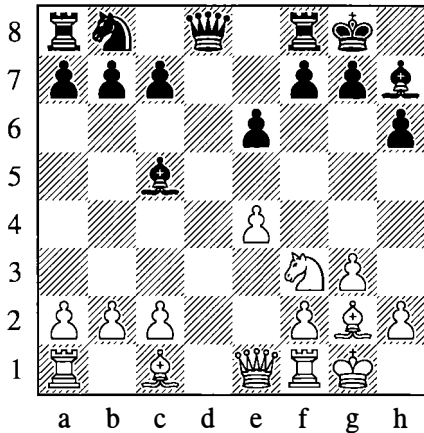
7...0-0 8.e4 dxe4

This gives White the possibility to cramp Black's game. The right move was 8...♗h7.

9.♖xe4 ♖xe4

On 9...♗e7 White intended 10.♖h4, which forces 10...♗xe4. After 11.dxe4 and a subsequent e4-e5, the bishop on g2 would exert strong pressure along the h1-a8 diagonal.

10.dxe4 ♗h7



11.b4!

With gain of tempo, White opens the way for his bishop to develop on b2.

11...♗e7 12.♗b2 ♖a6

Black intends, after ...c7-c6, to transfer his knight to c7 and simplify the game by exchanges on the d-file. Yet despite the exchange of all the rooks, White retains a positional advantage.

13.a3 c6 14.♖d1 ♖c8 15.c4 ♖c7 16.♖c3

The plan of attack against f7, which this move initiates, is unsuccessful. White should play 16.c5 or 16.♖e5.

16...♗f6 17.♖e5

The exchange sacrifice 17.e5 ♗e7 18.♖d6 was tempting, but after 18...♖e8 19.c5 ♗e4 or 19...♖xd6, no special benefits for White are discernible.

17...♖d8 18.♗f3

It was on this move, with its threat of 19.♗h5, that White had set his hopes, but Black has a simple defence.

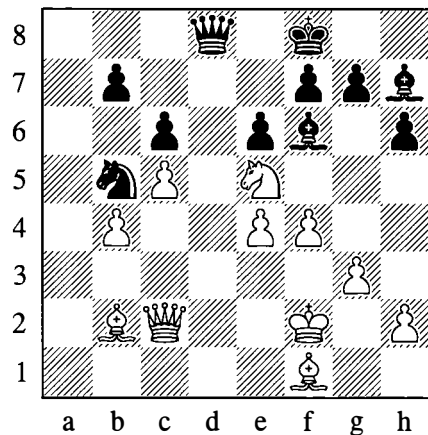
18...♖e8 19.♖xd8 ♖xd8 20.♖d1 ♖c7 21.c5

Of course it wouldn't pay to let the knight get to d6.

21...a5 22.♗g2 axb4 23.axb4 ♖d8 24.♖xd8 ♖xd8

In this position Black offered a draw, which White declined.

25.♖c2 ♖c7 26.♗f1 ♖b5 27.f4 ♖f8 28.♖f2



28...♗xe5?

A serious error. Black should refrain from exchanges, as White's dark-squared bishop now acquires great strength.

29.♗xe5 f6

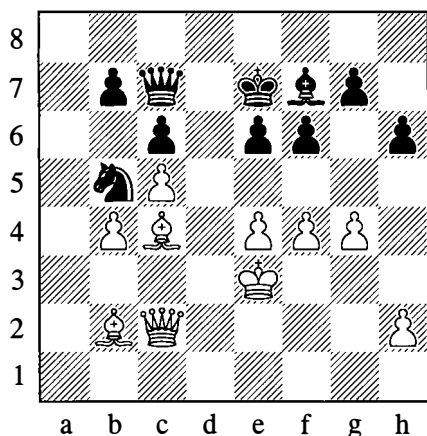
Black can't do without this move, but in order to force it White would have had to expend a good deal of effort.

Now after brief preparation, White sets about

the following plan. His bishop is brought to c4 and his king to e3, after which the advance of his g-pawn will create a weakness in Black's camp on f6 or g7 – which will be very hard to defend.

30.♖b2 ♔e7 31.♙c4 ♙g6 32.♔e3 ♙f7 33.g4 ♚c7

Preventing 34.g5 in view of 34...hxg5 35.fxg5 fxg5 36.♙xg7 ♚f4†. But there is other trouble in store for Black.



34.e5! ♚d8

[Ed. note: A more tenacious reply is 34...♚d7. If White then continues as in the game, with 35.exf6† gxf6 36.h4 ♔c7 37.♚c3, Black has the possibility of 37...e5 38.fxe5 ♚xg4 with counterplay.]

35.exf6† gxf6 36.h4

In mutual time-trouble White recoils from winning a pawn by 36.♙xb5 cxb5 37.♚c3, as the prospect of a position with opposite bishops worries him. But a move later Black forces him to continue in that way.

36...♔c7

It was worth seriously considering 36...♚g8.

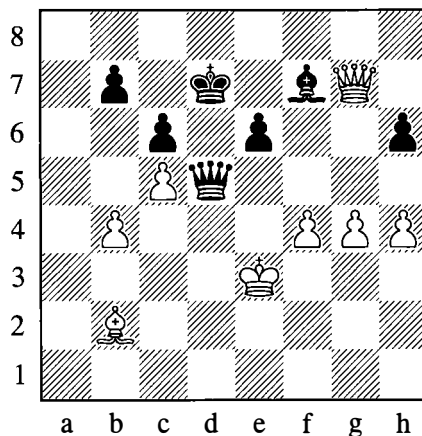
37.♚c3 ♔d5†

The hopes Black places in the opposite

bishops are not borne out. But after 37...♔e8 or 37...♚h8 White would still have an overwhelming position.

38.♙xd5 ♚xd5 39.♚xf6† ♔e8 40.♚h8† ♔d7 41.♚g7

White sealed this move. The adjournment analysis showed that Black's position was lost.



41...♔e8

In the event 41...♚b3† 42.♙c3 ♔e8 43.h5! White wins easily, as the weakness of the h6-pawn means that he can go in for a queen exchange.

42.♙f6

Now if 42.h5 ♚h1, the white king won't succeed in finding shelter from perpetual check. But after the move played, the threat of 43.♚h8† forces the black queen to take up a less effective position on d1.

42...♚b3† 43.♙c3

Otherwise Black gives perpetual check.

43...♚d1

White would be given more trouble by 43...h5.

44.♚h8† ♔d7 45.♚b8 ♚c1†

The immediate 45...♚g1† wouldn't alter

anything. After 46.♔d2 ♖f2† 47.♔d1 ♖f1† 48.♔c2 ♖e2† 49.♔d2 ♖a6 the same position would arise as in the game.

46.♔d2 ♖g1† 47.♔d3 ♖f1† 48.♔c2 ♖a6

After 48...♞c4† 49.♔b2 ♖d4† 50.♔c3 ♖f2† 51.♔a3 e5, the win is simple: 52.♞xb7† ♔e8 53.♞xc6† ♔f8 54.♞c8† ♔e7 55.♞c7† ♔f8 56.♞d8†.

49.h5! ♖a2†

Now to escape from the checks, the white king makes a return trip to the kingside.

50.♔d3 ♖b1† 51.♔e2 ♖e4† 52.♔f2 ♖d4† 53.♔e3 ♖xb4 54.♞f8 ♖b2† 55.♔g3 ♖f6 56.♖d6† ♔c8 57.♔d4

Going into an easily won endgame.

57...♞d8 58.♞xd8† ♔xd8 59.♔g7 ♔c7 60.♔xh6 b6 61.cxb6† ♔xb6 62.♔h4

Black resigned.

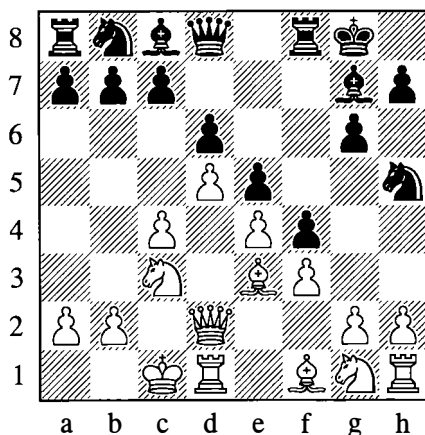
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GAME 22

Tigran Petrosian – Svetozar Gligoric

Zurich 1953

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♔g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♔e3 e5 7.d5 ♘h5 8.♞d2 f5 9.0-0-0 f4

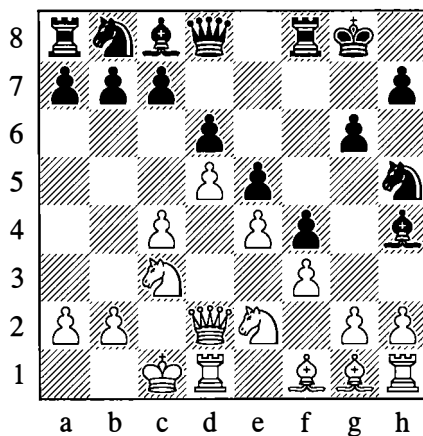


In the present game Black makes this move with the idea of bringing his bishop round to h4 and then advancing his g-pawn. In this way he neutralizes White's kingside initiative.

10.♔f2 ♔f6 11.♘ge2

Black was threatening to force an exchange of bishops with his next move; given the pawn structure, this would be to his advantage.

11...♔h4 12.♔g1



12...g5?

Black pursues his plan in too straightforward a manner, giving White the opportunity to seize the initiative on the queenside. He should have prevented 13.c5 by playing 12...♘a6 or 12...♘d7.

13.c5 g4 14.♔b1 gxf3 15.gxf3 ♘a6 16.c6! ♘f6?

A serious mistake that leads to a decisive weakening of his queenside. He should have played 16...bxc6 17.dxc6 ♖e8, attacking the c6-pawn.

17.cxb7 ♔xb7 18.♘g3

White decided on this move very quickly, having ascertained with ease that the black king's position becomes extremely unsafe after 18...fxg3 19.hxg3 ♔xg3 20.♞g5† ♔h8 21.♞xg3.

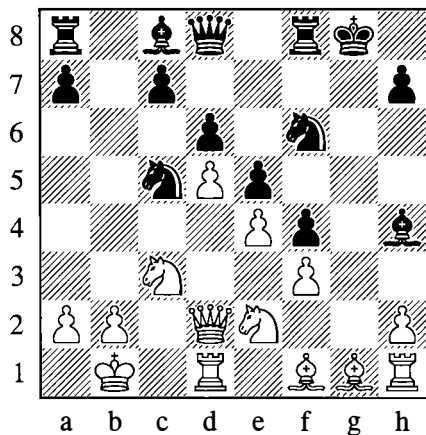
Allowing the knight to reach f5 is unpleasant for Black, so 18...♙c8 suggests itself. White then counted on winning by 19.♙xa6 ♙xa6 20.♘f5, with two threats – 21.♘h4 and 21.♖g2† (on 20...♘h5, White has the decisive 21.♖g2† ♖h8 22.♖g4).

18...♙c8

When Black played 18...♙c8 after all, White noticed that 19.♙xa6 ♙xa6 20.♘f5 could be answered by the simple 20...♘e8. After a long think he had to return his knight to e2, in order to go ahead with active queenside operations.

19.♘ge2 ♘c5

Better 19...♘d7, with 20...♘ac5 or 20...♘b6 to follow.



20.♙xc5!

It's a pity to give up the important bishop. However, a calculation of specific variations showed that Black would be unable to defend his pawn on c5.

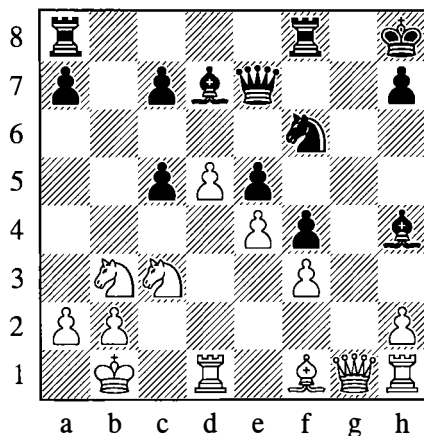
20...dxc5 21.♘c1

In planning his attack on the c5-pawn, White needs to keep a watchful eye on his opponent's dark-squared bishop, which in some circumstances could prove very dangerous. Thus, 21.♘a4 would be inferior owing to 21...♙f2.

21...♖e7 22.♘b3 ♙d7

Preventing 23.♘a4, but Black has an unpleasant surprise awaiting him.

23.♖g2† ♖h8 24.♖g1!



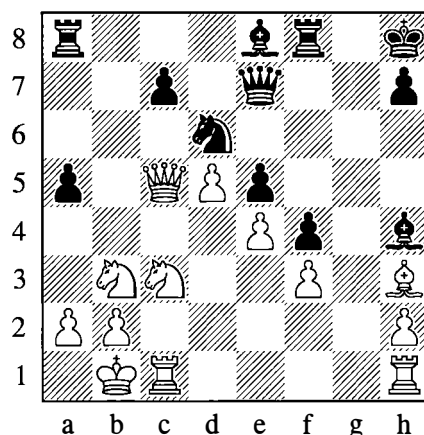
24...♘e8

A more stubborn defence was 24...♖ab8. Then 25.♖xc5 is forced, seeing that 25.♘xc5 would fail to 25...♖g8. After 25...♖xc5 26.♘xc5 ♖b6 it wouldn't be so easy for White to exploit his material plus.

25.♖xc5 ♘d6 26.♖c1

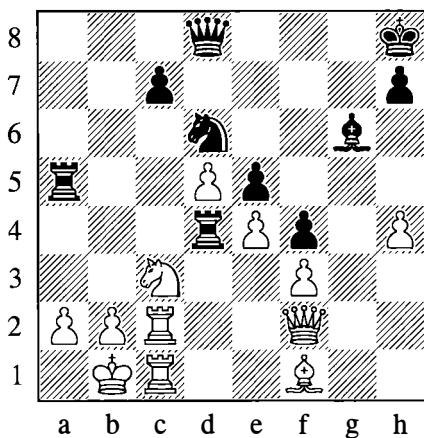
Capturing a second pawn with 26.♖xc7 would give Black the chance to activate his pieces by 26...♖f8 27.♖a5 ♙f2.

26...♙e8 27.♙h3 a5



Black does his utmost to bring about complications, however slight.

28. ♖xa5 ♕f2 29. ♜xf2 ♜xa5 30. ♜hg1 ♕g6
31. ♕f1 ♜b8 32. ♜c2 ♖f7 33. h4 ♖d6 34. ♕d3
♜b4 35. ♜gc1 ♜d4 36. ♕f1 ♜d8



37. ♖e2?

White had a few minutes left to reach the time control. In his haste to make 40 moves, he commits an error that could have cost him dearly.

37... ♜da4?

It's amazing that such an experienced player as Gligoric should miss his chance to play 37... ♜xe4. Even if incorrect, the sacrifice would have brought about the complications in which Black had to seek practical chances, since with quiet continuations his position is hopeless.

After 37... ♜xe4 38. fxe4 ♖xe4 39. ♜e1 ♜xd5 Black would obtain a very strong attack. The move 39... ♜xd5 was what both players at the board overlooked.

38. ♖c3 ♜d4 39. b3 ♜b8 40. h5 ♕xh5 41. ♜h4

Black resigned.

1-0

Chapter 4

1954-1956

While Tigran was accomplishing his leisurely ascent to the top of the chess pyramid, his play attracted an immense number of admirers. As a little anecdote, Salo Flohr relates: “One day in 1951, when Petrosian had lost his first two games in the 19th USSR Championship, he picked up the telephone receiver and heard an unknown voice ask him in Armenian, ‘Who gave you the right to lose?’ This question made such an impression on Tigran that he didn’t upset his admirers again.”

And here are the reminiscences of Mark Taimanov, describing a warm reception at Buenos Aires airport in 1954:

With a steep turn, the plane made its descent.

“Look what a crowd there is at the airport!” someone exclaimed. “I’d be interested to know who they’re here to meet.”

“Us, who else? See, there’s some writing in Russian: ‘Welcome! Soviet chessplayers are messengers of peace and friendship between nations.’”

On the ground, people were waving their hats and little flags of various colours, and shouting something.

We had hardly appeared on the steps to disembark when a roar of greetings and cheers in honour of our country erupted. “Here’s to Russia! Long live the Soviets!” Breaking through the police cordon, hundreds of people rushed towards us. They shook our hands and embraced us. A rhythmic chant came up from the crowd: “Ke-res, Bron-stein”, and then suddenly from a chorus of voices: “Pet-ro-sian! Pet-ro-sian!” It was local Armenians who had come to greet our Grandmaster. They lifted him up and carried him shoulder-high. In South America there are large numbers of Armenians who long ago emigrated from various ends of the earth, and the arrival of Petrosian – a “live” Soviet Armenian – was a great and interesting event for them. Their enthusiasm reached its peak shortly before our departure a few days later, when Petrosian, who possessed a good voice, sang an Armenian song in the city chess club.

The Soviet team’s arrival in Buenos Aires was the start of a series of appearances in 1954 which included matches against the teams of Uruguay, France, the USA, England and Sweden. These matches were won convincingly by the Soviet Grandmasters.

But the chief tournament of the year was the 21st Championship of the USSR, which started in January 1954 in Kiev. The first-time winner of the event was Yuri Averbakh, who finished a point and a half ahead of the Leningrad players Korchnoi and Taimanov. Petrosian played with his customary supply of solidity, and coming through the tournament without loss, he shared

4th-5th places with Lisitsyn. In the autumn he headed the “Spartak” team in the USSR Team Championship, and by making the best score on top board, he helped his favourite club to victory too.

The 22nd Soviet Championship, held at the beginning of 1955 in Moscow, was an elimination contest: apart from the title of national Champion, four tickets to the Interzonal Tournament were at stake. Petrosian restricted himself to a “minimal” programme. His tournament strategy incurred criticism from the *Izvestia* columnist Vasily Panov: “Up until round 15, in addition to Botvinnik and Smyslov, there was a realistic chance of first prize for Geller, Spassky or Taimanov. I deliberately exclude Petrosian from this group even though he had scored the same number of points, since it was clear from the very first rounds that he hadn’t set himself the task of fighting for a medal; he was pursuing the easier if also respectable aim of getting into the ‘Interzonal four’. This is what explains Petrosian’s cold, economical, cautious play, his eleven draws with three wins and not a single loss, his peculiar rivalry with that absolute champion of draws, Flohr. But if draws, in Flohr’s case, stem from a deep inner conviction which he has more than once defended in print, with Petrosian they result from the fact that the tournament is an eliminator, transforming ardent youths into little senile men.”

Indeed, in his remaining five games Petrosian was content with four draws and a win in the last round against the tail-ender Shcherbakov. This proved adequate for a share of 3rd-6th places with Botvinnik, Ilivitsky and Spassky. It was Geller who became USSR Champion for the first time, after winning a play-off match with Smyslov.

GAME 23

Rashid Nezhmetdinov – Tigran Petrosian

Kiev 1954

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6
5.♘c3 a6 6.♙g5

White often combines this move with developing the queen on f3, castling long and then launching a pawn storm on the kingside.

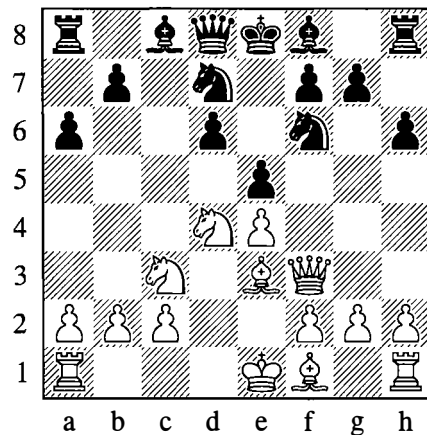
In this game Black was to succeed in exposing the negative aspects of White’s all too straightforward strategy.

6...♘bd7 7.♚f3 h6 8.♙e3

After this move Black plays ...e7-e5 in favourable conditions. White didn’t of course want to give up the dark-squared bishop that plays an important part in his plans, but on e3 this bishop is badly placed.

The best move was 8.♙d2, which Black intended to answer with 8...♚b6.

8...e5



9.♘f5?

A mistaken move that enables Black to drive the knight back to g3, where it occupies an extremely poor position. The right move was 9.♘b3.

9...g6 10.♟g3 b5 11.h4 h5

Black doesn't of course allow the h-pawn to advance further.

12.♞g5 ♞e7 13.0-0-0

As his following moves show, White is still dreaming of an attack, disregarding the fact that his pieces – especially the knight on g3 and the queen on f3 – are not well placed.

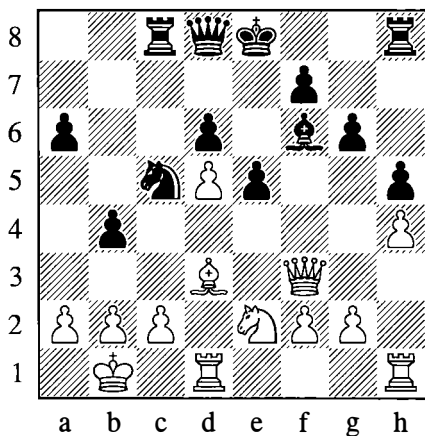
He had to meet the impending threat of ...b5-b4 by playing 13.a3, followed by 14.♞d3 and 15.♟ge2.

13...♞b7

The immediate 13...b4 was not bad either. But the point is that Black aims to harass the knight on c3 at a moment when it can only go to d5.

14.♞b1 ♞c8 15.♞d3 ♟c5!

Threatening the extremely unpleasant 16...♟e6.

16.♟ge2 b4 17.♞xf6 ♞xf6 18.♟d5 ♞xd5 19.exd5

Black's advantage resides in the strong position of his knight on c5 and the possibility of advancing his e-, f- and a-pawns.

19...♞e7

On 19...♞xh4 White could play 20.g4, with complications welcome to him.

20.♟g3

Now Black *does* take the h-pawn; 20.♞c4 was relatively best.

20...♞xh4 21.♟e4 ♞g5 22.g3

If White regains his pawn by 22.♟xc5 ♞xc5 23.♞xa6, then after 23...f5 Black obtains a strong attack, utilizing the opened a-file and the a1-h8 diagonal.

22...a5 23.♞d1 ♟xe4 24.♞xe4 f5 25.♞d3 ♞f6

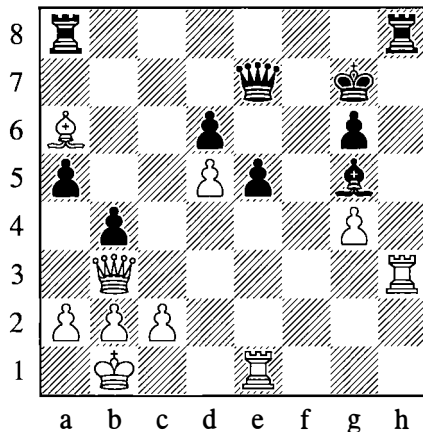
Black has an extra pawn with an active position. The presence of opposite bishops is of no great significance.

26.♞b5† ♟f7 27.♞b3 ♟g7 28.f3 h4 29.g4

This makes it a good deal easier for Black to exploit his material plus, as it allows him a passed pawn at once; 29.gxh4 would have given more saving chances.

29...fxg4 30.fxg4 ♞g5 31.♞d3

Giving Black the opportunity to push his h-pawn; the trap that White has devised encounters a refutation.

31...h3 32.♞a6 ♞a8 33.♞xh3

This is what White has been hoping for. After 33...♖xh3 34.♗xh3 ♖xa6 35.♖h1 his threats are very dangerous.

33...♖h4!

In this way White's scheme is thwarted.

34.♖eh1 ♖xa6 35.g5 ♗xg5 36.♗c4 ♖a7 37.♖xh4 ♖xh4 38.♗xh4 ♗xh4 39.♖xh4 ♖c7 40.♖h1 g5 41.♕c1 ♖c5 42.♖d1 ♕g6 43.♖d2 g4 44.♕d1 ♕f5

White resigned.

0-1

GAME 24

Arthur Bisguier – Tigran Petrosian

New York 1954

Notes by Grigory Levenfish

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 c5 3.♖f3 cxd4 4.♖xd4 ♖c6 5.♖c3 e6 6.g3

If 6.e4, then 6...♖b4 7.f3 d5 is unpleasant.

6...♖c5 7.♖b3

On 7.♖e3, there would follow 7...♗b6 8.♖a4 ♖b4†.

7...♖e7 8.♖g2 0-0 9.0-0 d6 10.e4

A routine move, restricting the bishop on g2 and giving White a weak point on d3. The right continuation was 10.♖d4 ♖d7 11.b3.

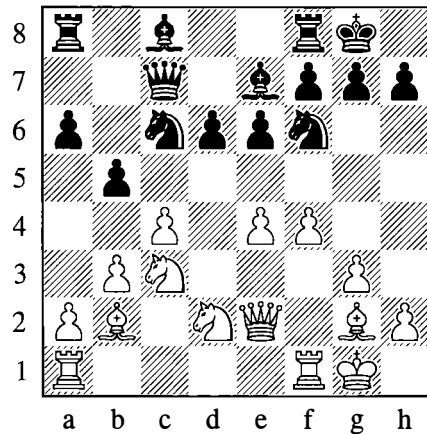
10...♖e5 11.♗e2 ♗c7 12.♖d2 a6 13.b3

White allows ...b7-b5, overlooking a tactical finesse. He should have played 13.a4, with 14.b3 and 15.♖a3 to follow.

13...b5! 14.f4 ♖c6

The pawn on b5 turns out to be invulnerable: 15.cxb5 axb5 16.♖xb5 ♗b6† 17.♕h1 ♖a6 18.a4 ♖xb5 19.axb5 ♖d4.

15.♖b2



15...b4

A difficult move that testifies to Petrosian's subtle understanding of the position. In the event of 15...♖b7 White could take a fresh think and initiate play on the queenside by 16.cxb5 axb5 17.♖fc1. Now, however, he will only be able to oppose Black's mounting pressure in that sector of the board by attacking on the kingside. But the attack has no chance of success because the white pieces are ineffectively placed, and – most importantly – Black can organize a counter-stroke in the centre at the appropriate moment.

16.♖d1

After 16.♖a4 the knight would be shut out of play for a long time.

16...a5 17.♖e3

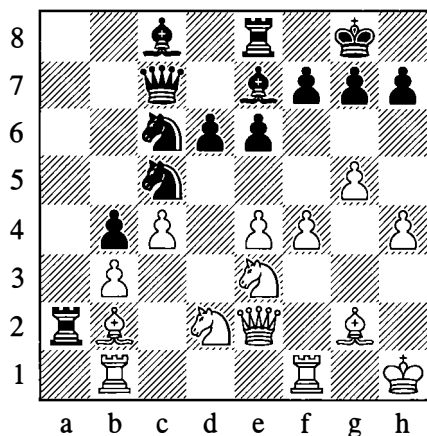
It was worth considering 17.a4.

17...a4 18.♖ab1 axb3 19.axb3 ♖a2

A first achievement: the rook has occupied the second rank and the white knights cannot reach c1 to evict it.

20.g4 ♖d7 21.g5 ♖e8 22.♕h1 ♖c5 23.h4

Preparing f4-f5.



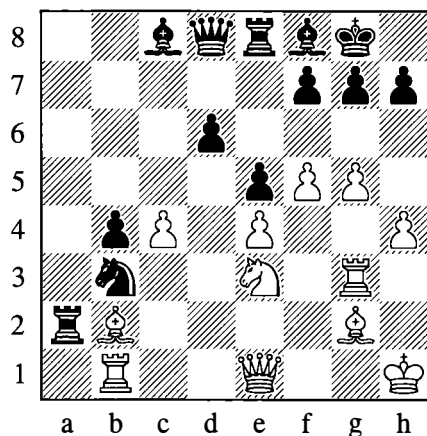
23...♖d8!

Now on 24.f5 Black plays 24...♗e5, and if 25.♗xe5 then 25...dxe5 26.♖fd1 ♖d4. To strengthen the attack, White brings a rook across to the g-file.

24.♖f3 ♗f8 25.♖g3 e5 26.f5 ♗d4

Now White can no longer avert material losses. After 27.♗xd4 exd4 28.♗d5 ♗xf5 the point e4 is indefensible, while 27.♖d1 loses a piece to 27...♗d3.

27.♖f1 ♗dxb3 28.♗xb3 ♗xb3 29.♖e1



29...♗c5!

Petrosian conducts the whole game very powerfully. Defending the b4-pawn by 29...♖a5 would give White some chances of

salvation after 30.♗d5. Returning the pawn, Petrosian executes an interesting combination on the pinning theme.

30.♖xb4 ♗b7 31.♗d5 ♖a4! 32.♖d2!

If 32.♖e3 then 32...♗a6. By surrendering the pawn on c4, White is hoping for 32...♖xc4 33.♗a3! ♗xd5 34.♖xd5 ♗d4 35.♖c6 ♗d3 36.♖b7, when his pieces suddenly become very active. But Petrosian has something completely different in mind.

32...♗xd5 33.♖xd5 ♖b4!

This pin proves decisive.

35.♖d2

After an exchange of queens, Black wins with ...♖ab8.

35...♖b7 36.♖g2 ♖b8 37.♗d1

Otherwise 37...♗a4.

37...♖xe4 38.♗c2 ♖xc4 39.g6 ♖xb2 40.gxh7 ♗h8 41.♖bg1 ♖xh4 ♗h2 ♖f4

White resigned. In this game Petrosian outplayed the US Champion both strategically and tactically.

0-1

GAME 25

Tigran Petrosian – Alexey Suetin

Riga 1954

1.c4 ♗f6 2.♗c3 g6 3.e4

By choosing this order of moves, White aimed to avoid the main lines of the Grünfeld Defence which arise after 1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 d5.

3...d6

We now reach a King's Indian Defence, which White is usually very happy to play against.

4.d4 ♖g7 5.♙e2 0-0 6.♘f3

The continuation quite often employed by Averbakh, 6 ♙g5, is interesting.

6...e5 7.d5

Recent contests have seen Black score a string of impressive victories in the variation 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘e7 9.♘e1 ♘d7, followed by 10...f5. And so there has been a sharp drop in the number of players keen to handle the white side of the positions arising from this line. (In my own view, to be sure, the defeats White suffered can be explained by his insufficiently precise play.)

7...♘bd7 8.0-0 ♘c5 9.♙c2 a5

An indispensable move for fortifying the knight's position on c5.

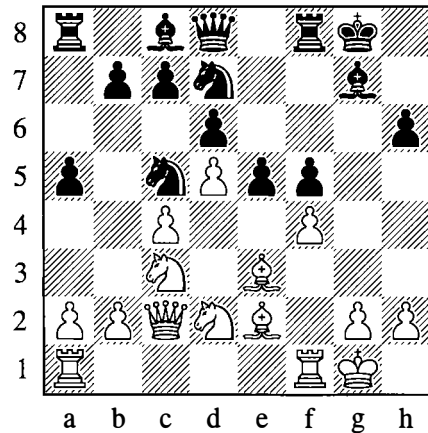
10.♙g5

After 10.♘d2 ♙h6! White will sooner or later be compelled to exchange the dark-squared bishops – an exchange which, given the present pawn structure, favours Black.

The move in the game forces Black into a slight weakening of his kingside position – which will be a highly significant factor in the later struggle.

10...h6 11.♙e3

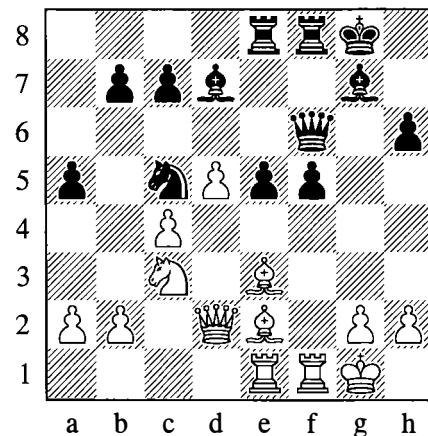
In the event of 11...♘g4 12.♙xc5 dxc5 13.h3 ♘f6 14.♘xe5 ♘xd5 15.cxd5 ♙xe5 16.f4, White would obtain strong centre pawns while Black would have a very active dark-squared bishop. But the struggle would be conducted in a barely investigated position. Alexey Suetin prefers a line that has had plenty of testing and is, one must say, stereotyped; he later intends to employ a move recommended by that great connoisseur of the King's Indian Defence, Isaak Boleslavsky (...exf4).

11...♘fd7 12.♘d2 f5 13.exf5 gxf5 14.f4**14...exf4!**

With this move Black frees the diagonal for his bishop on g7, and the e5-point for his knight.

15.♙xf4 ♘e5 16.♙ae1 ♙d7 17.♘f3 ♙f6 18.♙d2 ♙ae8 19.♘xe5

In granting Black a strong pair of pawns on the e- and f-files, White is taking a critical decision.

19...dxe5 20.♙e3

One of the most complex strategic issues that have concerned more than one generation of masters is the problem of hanging pawns. As a rule, they arise (for either White or Black) in

the closed openings, especially in the Queen's Gambit. A player who likes to have hanging pawns relies on utilizing their dynamic strength.

20...b6 21.♘h5

A useless move as long as White is not intending to force a draw after the obvious 21...♞e7. A better move was 21.♙d1.

21...♞e7 22.♙d1

After 22.d6 ♞xd6 23.♞xd6 cxd6 24.♘d5 ♞e6 25.♘c7 White could force a draw by repetition of moves, but that is all.

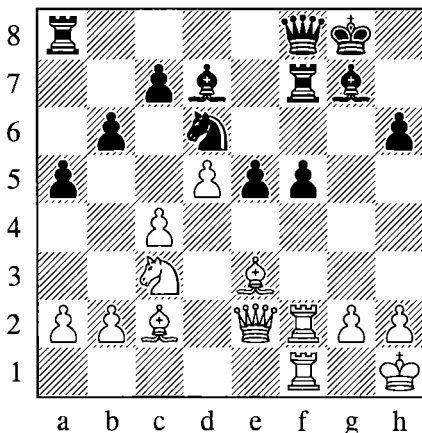
22...♞d6 23.♙c2 ♞ef7 24.♙h1 ♞a8

In the regrouping of forces that Black has devised, a better square for this rook would be b8.

25.♞e2 ♞f8 26.♞ef2 ♘b7 27.♞e2

A kingside initiative for White is coming together, based on the threat of strong pressure against the pawn on f5. Pushing this pawn to f4 and presenting White with the e4-square is not a good option. If Black tries ...e5-e4 to shut off the diagonal of the bishop on c2, a serious threat of g2-g4 arises.

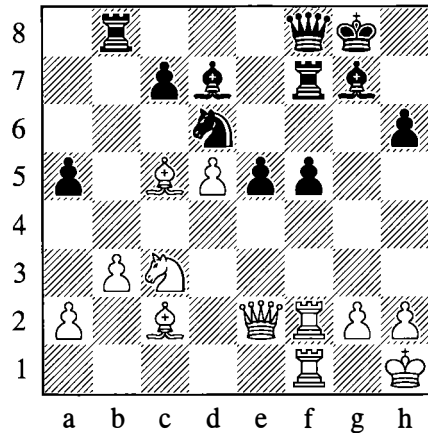
27...♘d6



28.c5!

If the black rook were on b8, this move would hardly be any good, as after 28...bxc5 the pawn on b2 would be *en prise*.

28...bxc5 29.♙xc5 ♞b8 30.b3



30...♞c8?

An incomprehensible manoeuvre, taking the queen away from the main scene of action. The right move was 30...e4, after which 31.♘xe4 would fail to 31...♙b5.

31.♞h5 ♞a6?

A second mistake, after which White quickly creates dangerous threats on the kingside.

32.g4! f4

Forced, but now the seemingly formidable black passed pawns are easily blocked, and with the threat of their destruction combined with his attack on the king, White wins quickly in his opponent's time trouble.

33.♞e1 ♞c8 34.♙xd6

The start of a forcing manoeuvre that leads to the ruin of Black's position.

34...cxd6 35.♙g6 ♞f8 36.♘e4 f3 37.g5 ♞f4
38.♞g1 ♙f5 39.gxh6 ♙xe4 40.♙xe4
1-0

GAME 26

Tigran Petrosian – Mark Taimanov

Moscow 1955

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 c6 5.e3
♜bd7 6.♙d3 ♙b4

At one time this bishop sortie was seen fairly often in tournament practice and brought Black many setbacks. In the 22nd Soviet Championship, apart from the present game, the 6...♙b4 line was employed in Taimanov – Botvinnik, and in that game too Black obtained a bad position.

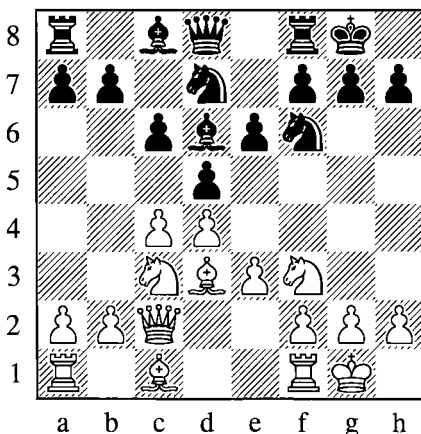
7.0–0

More often 7.a3 is played.

7...0–0 8.♞c2 ♙d6

Black has obviously decided on the plan that Chigorin in his day had recommended, involving the moves ...♙d6, ...dxc4 and ...e6-e5; but in carrying this plan out, he commits a major inaccuracy.

The correct method is 8...dxc4, with 9...♙d6 to follow.



9.b3!

After this, Black can no longer deploy his forces according to his intended scheme.

On 9...dxc4 White advantageously recaptures with the pawn, while 9...e5 is met by 10.cxd5 cxd5 11.♘b5 with a plus.

9...dxc4 10.bxc4 e5 11.♙b2 ♞e8 12.♘e4!

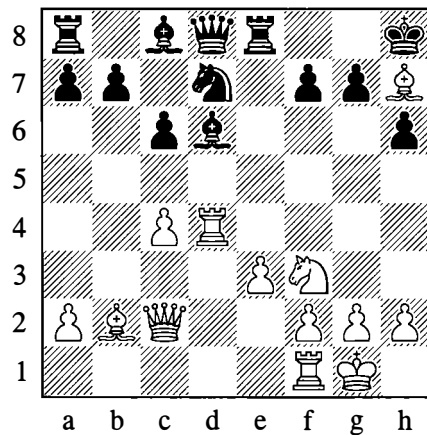
In this way White forces an exchange on e4, after which a dangerous threat to the black king's position arises.

12...♘xe4 13.♙xe4 h6

Annotating this game in the tournament bulletin, Novotelnov comments that 13...h6 is forced, since 13...g6 is clearly weak.

But that is incorrect; after 13...g6 Black's defence would be easier. For example, 14.♞ad1 ♞e7 15.♞fe1 f5 16.dxe5 would not be good in view of 16...♙b4.

14.♞ad1 exd4 15.♙h7† ♜h8 16.♞xd4



Bringing the rook too into the battle. The following mistake leads to immediate disaster for Black.

16...♙c5?

A more stubborn defence was 16...♙f8.

17.♞f4 ♞e7 18.♞e4 ♞f8 19.♞h4!

Now White threatens 20.♞xh6. Black has to block the diagonal of the bishop on b2 by playing 19...f6, which decisively weakens the light squares on the kingside.

19...f6 20.♗g6 ♖e7 21.♞h5

The accurate move. Freeing the square h4 for his knight, White simultaneously prevents ...♗e5.

21...♗d6 22.♞d1 ♗e5 23.♗a3 c5 24.♗h4

Black resigned. Despite material equality, he cannot stop the white knight from coming to g6.

1-0

GAME 27

Israel Horowitz – Tigran Petrosian

Moscow 1955

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.♗c3 d6 5.e4 g6 6.g3 ♗g7 7.♗g2 0-0 8.♗ge2

White aims to meet ...f7-f5 with f2-f4, after which it will be difficult for Black to maintain the tension in the centre; while after an exchange of pawns on f4, a white knight will be controlling the weak point e6. Black therefore places his knight on h5, limiting the activity of White's knight on e2.

8...♗h5 9.0-0 ♗d7

Black didn't like 9...f5 10.f4 exf4 11.♗xf4 ♗xf4 12.♗xf4, seeing that 12...♗d7 is unavailable.

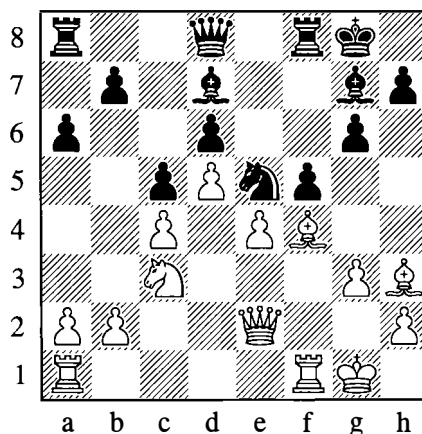
10.♗e3 f5 11.f4

Both sides are intently pursuing their plans. We should note that White couldn't play 11.♞d2 on account of 11...f4! 12.gxf4 ♗b6! with advantage to Black.

11...exf4 12.♗xf4 ♗xf4 13.♗xf4

The simplest answer to 13.gxf4 is 13...fxe4 14.♗xe4 ♗f6, with the better game for Black.

13...♗e5 14.♞e2 a6 15.♗h3 ♗d7



16.exf5?

White had pinned great hopes on this move; after 16...♗xf5 17.♗xf5 ♞xf5 he counted on playing 18.♗e4, with the threat of 19.g4.

16...gxf5!

Probably White's hadn't seriously reckoned with this way of recapturing. Yet the pawn on f5, depriving the white pieces of the e4-square, is easy for Black to defend.

17.♞ae1 ♞e8

An immediate 17...b5 promised Black no particular advantages after 18.cxb5 axb5 19.♗xb5 ♞xa2 20.♗xd6 or 20.♗c3.

18.♗d1 ♞g6

If 18...b5 now, White would have the simple answer 19.b3.

19.♗e3 ♞ae8 20.♞c2 ♞h5

By forcing the bishop to retreat to g2, Black liquidates the pressure against his f5-pawn, and this unties his hands for operations in the centre and on the kingside.

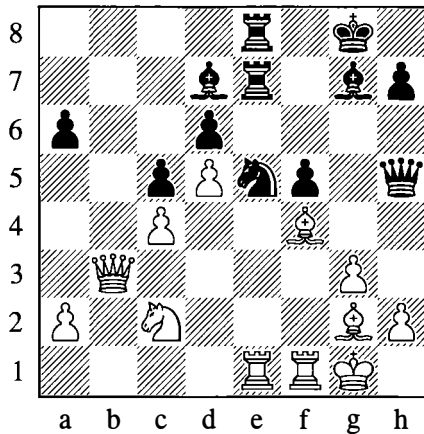
21.♗g2 ♞e7 22.b4 b6

After 22...cxb4 23.c5, threatening 24.cxd6 or 24.c6, the white pieces would become very active.

23.bxc5 bxc5 24.♞b3 ♞fe8 25.♗c2

White ought first and foremost to have defended against the threat of 25...♖g4, and to this end he should have played 25.h3. Perhaps he didn't see that after 25.h3 ♖g6 26.♙f3 ♗xh3 27.♙g2 the black queen cannot escape persecution.

On c2 the knight occupies a poor position.



25...a5!

The continuation 25...♖g4 26.h3 ♗xe1 27.♗xe1 ♙d4† 28.♙h1 ♖f2† would only have led to a draw. Now White has great difficulty defending the pawn on c4.

26.h3

Although after 26.a4 a new weakness (the a4-pawn) would be formed in White's camp, he ought still to have decided on that move.

26...a4 27.♗b6 ♗g6

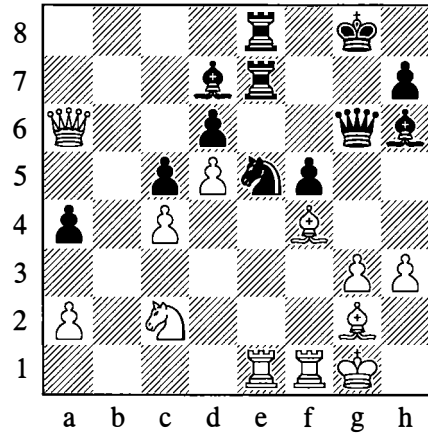
Here 27...♖xc4 was more precise. Black rejected the capture of the pawn so as not to give his opponent counterplay in the variation 27...♖xc4 28.♗a6 ♗xe1 29.♖xe1 ♗e2 30.♖f3; he didn't realize that after 30...♗xa2 White's tactical threats could easily be parried.

28.♗a6

After this the queen takes no further part in the fight, but there is no other way to defend

the c4-pawn, seeing that 28.♙xe5 ♙xe5 is completely hopeless.

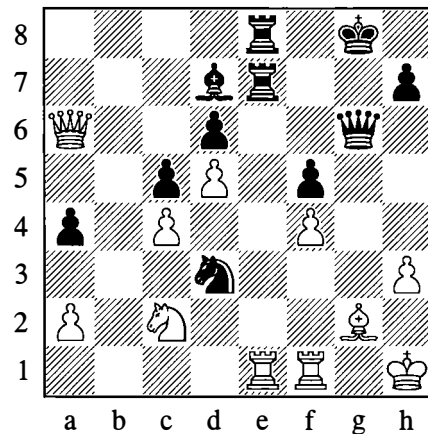
28...♙h6!



29.♙h1?

The final error. More chances could have been preserved by 29.♙h2, aiming to meet 29...♗g7 with 30.♙xe5 and a queen exchange.

29...♙xf4 30.gxf4 ♖d3



Now a decisive rook invasion on the second rank is inevitable.

31.♗xe7 ♗xe7 32.♗a5 ♗e2 33.♗d8† ♙e8 34.♙f3 ♗xc2 35.♙h5

White is in such a bad way that mate in one move by 35...♖g2# doesn't bother him, but Black "finds" a different way to win.

35...♠f2†

White resigned.

0-1

The 1955 Interzonal Tournament at Gothenburg, where nearly half of the 21 participants would qualify for the Candidates Tournament, was a "walk in the park" for Petrosian.

Salo Flohr relates:

"At the beginning of August 1955 in Sweden – following on from the tournaments of 1948 and 1952 – the blue placards with the black chess knight came out for the third time to proclaim that another Interzonal Tournament, with the participation of the world's strongest chessplayers, was taking place in Gothenburg.

"The participants in the forthcoming contest were interested to know how many of the leading finishers from Gothenburg would be admitted to the Candidates Tournament. There had been various proposals – 6, 8 or 9 players. On learning that the FIDE Congress had decided to admit nine 'Gothenburgers' plus Smyslov, they were all satisfied. It was fine, you could calmly play chess. If you couldn't manage first or second place, well, you *might* get into the top nine! Forty days of sheer 'heaven' lay ahead!

"Petrosian finished in 'his' place – fourth. In constructive discussions during the tournament, Tigran's older comrades had advised him to play more sharply, more actively. Unfortunately he kept to his basic programme – 'to finish in the first nine places'. It was only at the end of the tournament that we saw a different Petrosian, a combative one, energetic in his game with Pilnik, the creator of a superb combination against Guimard, bold and determined in his encounter with

Donner. Petrosian is still young and there are possibilities for him to reform, especially if he is aspiring to higher placings. However, in this talented Grandmaster's defence I would like to say a few words. He is playing at a time when a chessplayer is constantly being required to make it into the 'top three', or the 'top five', or the 'top nine' in qualification tournaments. You rarely play in a tournament where you can be truly creative in a way that suits your own chess feelings, without being afraid that some loss or other could be decisive for your future career."

GAME 28

Bogdan Sliwa – Tigran Petrosian

Gothenburg 1955

1.d4 ♠f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♠c3 g6 5.e4 ♗g7 6.♠ge2 0-0 7.♠f4

The knight is poorly placed here. Switching to the usual schemes of development with 7.g3 was more natural and better.

7...a6

A pawn sacrifice with 7...b5 deserved serious consideration.

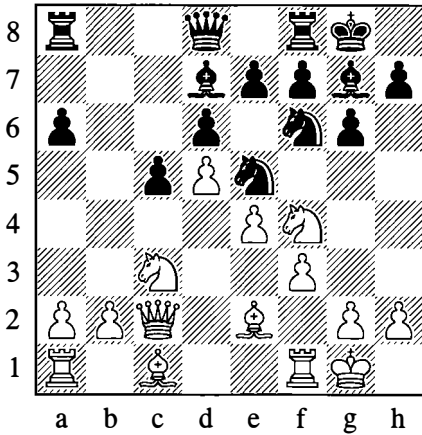
8.♗e2?

It was essential to play 8.a4. Now Black carries out the important advance ...b7-b5 without any trouble, and takes firm possession of the initiative.

8...b5

Of course White cannot capture on b5: after 9.cxb5 axb5 10.♗xb5 ♠xe4 11.♠xe4 ♖a5†, Black has the advantage. In view of the threatened 9...b4, White protects his e4-pawn.

9.f3 bxc4 10.♗xc4 ♠bd7 11.0-0 ♠e5 12.♗e2 ♗d7 13.♖c2



The results of the opening are lamentable for White. Black's knight on e5 is well placed, he has the half-open b-file at his disposal, and in conjunction with his strong bishop on g7 this enables him to create pressure on the queenside.

13...♖a5 14.♗d2 ♜fb8 15.♘d1 ♜b6 16.♙h1 ♘e8!

Black directs his knight along the route e8-c7-b5 towards the d4-square. At this point White would do best to hinder this plan with 17.♗c3 (then for instance 17...♘c7 18.a4).

17.♞b1 ♘c7 18.♘e3 ♘b5

Now the knight threatens to penetrate to d4, where it will occupy a commanding post. Nor does 19.♗xb5 axb5 relieve the white position.

19.♘c4 ♜a7

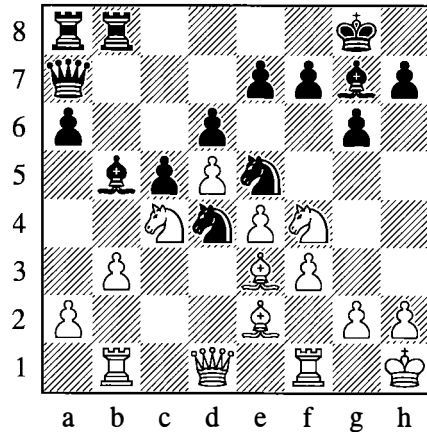
It was worth considering 19...♘xc4 20.♗xc4 ♘d4.

20.♜d1

White doesn't sense the approaching calamity. It was necessary to play 20.♗e3, so as to answer 20...♘d4 with 21.♗xd4, closing the a1-h8 diagonal. Should Black prefer 20...♘xc4 21.♗xc4 ♘d4, then 22.♜d3 would give a position with defensive capability.

20...♘d4 21.b3 ♗b5 22.♗e3?

He should have played 22.♘xe5, though Black would then have the pleasant choice between 22...dxe5 23.♘d3 a5 and 22...♗xe5 23.♗c4 a5, with advantage.



22...♘xe2!

Black voluntarily exchanges off his powerful knight, since he has in mind a forced variation leading to the win of a pawn.

23.♜xe2 a5!

There is no adequate defence against the threatened 24...♜a6.

24.♞fc1 ♜a6 25.♜c2 ♗xc4 26.bxc4 ♞xb1

A strong alternative was 26...♞b4.

27.♞xb1 ♘xc4

The upshot is that Black has won a pawn with a good position. The rest is a matter of technique.

28.♗c1 a4 29.h3 a3 30.♘d3 h5

The immediate 30...♘b2 would be answered by 31.♘xb2 axb2 32.♗xb2, when 32...♜xa2 fails to 33.♞a1.

31.♞b3 ♘b2 32.♘xb2 ♜f1+ 33.♙h2 axb2 34.♗xb2 ♞xa2 35.♞b8+ ♙h7 36.e5

One last chance: 36...♙xe5† is met by 37.♙xe5, winning for White.

36...♞xb2

White resigned.

0-1

GAME 29

Jan Hein Donner – Tigran Petrosian

Gothenburg 1955

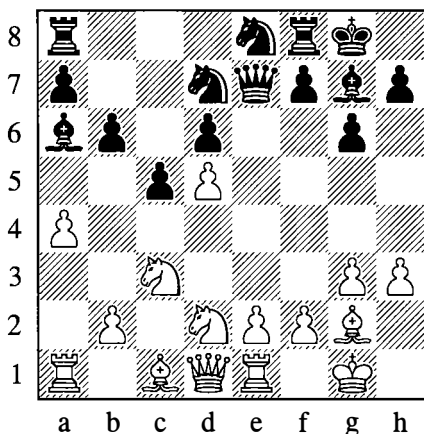
1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e6 4.♖c3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.♖f3 g6 7.♖d2 ♖bd7 8.g3 ♙g7 9.♙g2 0-0 10.0-0

In this position the most popular continuations are 10...a6 and 10...♞e8.

10...♞e7

This move had occurred in Gligoric – Petrosian, Zurich 1953, which continued 11.♖c4 ♖e5 12.♖xe5 ♞xe5 13.a4 a6 14.a5 ♞e8 15.♙f4 ♞e7 16.♞b3 ♖d7 17.♞fe1 ♖e5 18.♖a4 and White obtained the better game.

11.h3 b6 12.a4 ♙a6 13.♞e1 ♖e8



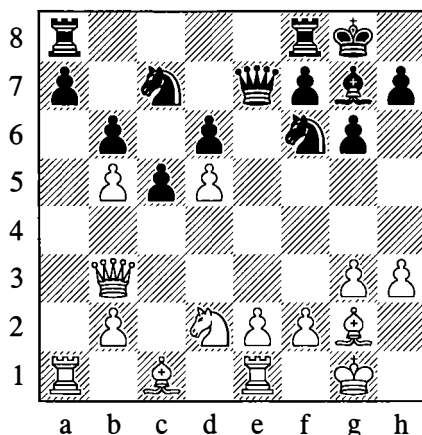
In Donner's games, the course that he selects here is one he repeatedly sticks to. White makes the moves h2-h3, a2-a4 and ♞e1,

which are basically prophylactic, and waits for his opponent to reveal his intentions. Having developed his bishop on a6 and played ...♖e8, Black aims to transfer this knight to c7 and gradually bring about the all-important advance ...b6-b5, which constitutes his chief trump in this opening.

14.♖b5

It was worth considering 14.♖de4. After, for example, 14...♖c7 15.♙g5 f6 16.♙f4 ♖e5, complex play arises with White having the better chances.

14...♙xb5 15.axb5 ♖c7 16.♞b3 ♖f6



Black has pinned great hopes on this move. The pawn on b5 is in danger, as 17...♞d7 is threatened. White can't defend the pawn from f1 with his bishop, because 17.e4 is met by 17...♖fxd5.

17.♖b1!

Well played! By redeploying the knight to c3, White securely protects his one real weakness – the b5-pawn.

At this stage Black faced no easy task in choosing a plan for the subsequent play. In the centre the advantage is with White, who will gradually set his e- and f-pawns in motion, preparing a breakthrough with e4-e5.

The conditions for any kingside operations by Black are lacking. Hence the only possibility remaining to him is to play on the queenside.

17...♟f8

The immediate 17...a6 18.bxa6 leads to a plus for White after 18...♟xa6 19.♟xa6 ♖b4 20.♟xb6 ♖b4 21.♟f4, or 18...♖xa6 19.♟xb6 ♖b4 (19...♟f8 20.♟c6 ♖b4 21.♟xa8) 20.♟xa8 ♟xa8 21.♟f4.

In this line 18...b5 looks like an improvement, but in that case White plays 19.a7, and it isn't clear how Black can recapture the a-pawn without trouble. If he plays 19...b4 with a view to 20...♖b5, White replies 20.♟a5.

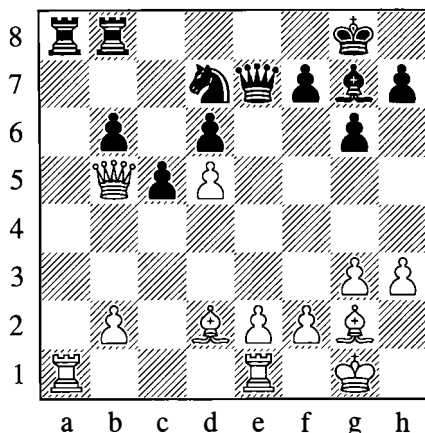
The correct move after 17...a6 18.bxa6 is 18...♟f8. In this way Black makes sure of regaining the a-pawn and carrying out ...b6-b5.

If White meets 17...a6 with 18.♖c3, then 18...c4 leads to no good: White continues with 19.♟b4 (not 19.♟xc4? axb5), which only increases Black's worries. Therefore after 18.♖c3 Black should prefer 18...axb5 19.♟xa8 ♟xa8 20.♖xb5 ♟a5 21.♖xc7 ♟xc7 22.♟d2 c4!, with considerably better prospects than in the actual game.

18.♖c3 a6 19.♟e3 axb5 20.♖xb5

Now White's rooks are connected, and he naturally doesn't concede the open a-file. On 20...♟a5, he has the unpleasant 21.♖a7.

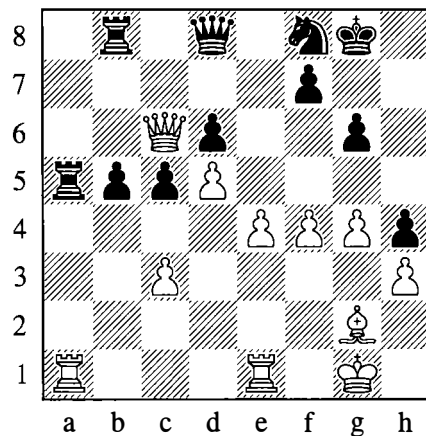
20...♖xb5 21.♟xb5 ♖d7 22.♟d2



The white bishop heads for c3 to exchange off its powerful opposite number. At the same time White prevents 22...♟a5.

22...h5 23.♟c3 ♟d8 24.f4 h4 25.g4 ♟xc3 26.bxc3 ♟a5 27.♟c6 ♖f8 28.e4 ♟c8 29.♟b7 ♟b8 30.♟c6 b5

Black declines the repetition of moves.



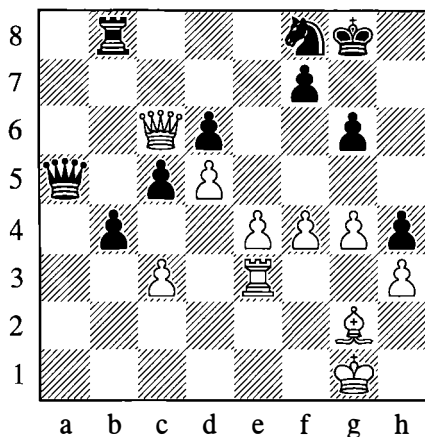
31.♟xa5?

When considering the possible consequences of my 30th move, I didn't like the prospect of White obtaining strong pawns on d6 and c6 after 31.e5! ♟b6 32.♟xa5! ♟xc6 33.dxc6 ♟xa5 34.exd6 ♟xc3. When the game was over I shared my thoughts with Donner. At first he was sceptical about the queen sacrifice, but after a little analysis he began heatedly demonstrating a win for White in this line! Over the board I had seen that 35.♟e4 is parried by 35...f5 36.d7 fxe4 37.d8=♟ ♟e1† 38.♟f1 e3 39.♟d3 c4. A better try is 35.♟d1, but then too Black evades all the dangers by 35...♟b3 36.♟d5 ♟e3†. White could force a draw with 36.♟e1 (instead of 36.♟d5). That would have been a logical conclusion to this tense struggle.

31...♟xa5 32.♟e3?

Relatively speaking, 32.♟xd6 was best.

32...b4



33. ♖xd6

If 33.cxb4, then 33...cxb4 34. ♖xd6 ♖a7; and now 35. ♕h2 b3 36. ♖e1 b2 37. ♖b1 ♖b3 with 38... ♖f2 to follow, or 35. ♕h1 b3 36. ♖e1 b2 37. ♖b1 ♖c8. The outcome of the fight is decided by White's weakened king position and Black's passed b-pawn.

33... ♖b6 34. ♖c7 bxc3 35. ♖e1 c2 36. ♖f1 ♖b4

There was also a quick win with 36... ♖b5, threatening 37... ♖xf1†.

37. ♕h2 ♖b7 38. ♖c8 ♖d7 39. ♖a8 ♖d2 40. ♖a3 c4 41. ♖a1 ♖b7

White resigned.

0-1

The Candidates Tournament took place in the spring of 1956 in Amsterdam. It was a double-round contest of ten Grandmasters. Nine of them had qualified from the Gothenburg Interzonal, and they were joined by Smyslov, Botvinnik's opponent in the match of 1954.

After his undefeated sequence of performances in 1955, Petrosian's losses in his very first two games in this tournament came as something of a shock. It was especially galling to blunder away his queen in a won position

against Bronstein. But these losses turned out to be his only ones, and Petrosian was merely galvanized by them. He had already "made up" for them by the end of the first cycle, and he finished the tournament with a worthy share of 3rd-7th places, behind Smyslov and Keres.

Shortly after the end, Petrosian recorded his impressions in the pages of the special bulletin devoted to the tournament.

"In recent years I have hardly ever managed to take part in tournaments where I could play without worrying about getting into the top three, or five, or nine.

"The fact that the tournaments were elimination contests has influenced my style of play, on which chess journalists have repeatedly made pointed comments. I should observe all the same that this style has virtually assured me of fulfilling the competitive norms, even though of course it seriously affects the creative side of the game.

"And then finally in the Candidates Tournament I resolved to do what any Grandmaster naturally wants to do – to 'play chess', to play every game without regard for the strength of my opponent, to play without bothering how the outcome of the game would affect my tournament result.

"Many people were astonished at my unsuccessful start. I won't hide the fact that it was a surprise to me too.

"Afterwards I began playing more confidently and gained on the leading group. Admittedly there were still some 'relapses' – I am thinking of my ten-move draw with Smyslov. But in general there was more play in these games. My game with Panno in the second cycle had a crucial effect on me. I chose to play 1.e4, which I do only rarely. A situation arose that was largely unfamiliar to me, and I quickly ended up in the worse position with the white pieces. The drawn result wholly satisfied me, but after that game I was somehow 'put off my stroke'.

“What general conclusion would I like to draw? It isn’t easy to harmonize competitive successes with a high level of creative achievement. Tournaments without the elimination factor need to be held more often – tournaments in which the creativity of our Grandmasters will not be fettered by the need to secure a place in the *next* tournament.”

Discussing the results of the first cycle of the Candidates Tournament, Max Euwe observed:

“Petrosian made a strong impression on the spectators and on me personally. Thanks to his outstanding positional flair, he makes splendid use of a minimal advantage and ‘squeezes out’ a point through painstaking work. His fine wins against Filip and Pilnik are characteristic of his style, and so are the ‘unachieved victories’ in his games with Smyslov and Geller. And if Petrosian should start playing a few combinations, it will be impossible to play chess against him.”

GAME 30

Tigran Petrosian – David Bronstein

Amsterdam 1956

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 0–0
5.♘f3 c5 6.0–0 ♘c6 7.d4 d6 8.dxc5 dxc5
9.♗e3 ♘d7

This move deservedly has a bad reputation;
9...♗a5 was better.

10.♗c1 ♘d4?

After the obvious reply, Black is practically forced to play ...e7–e5 which causes weaknesses to be formed on the d-file.

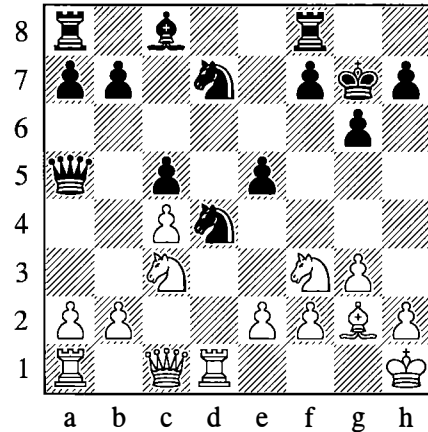
11.♗d1 e5 12.♗h6

White’s plan is simple: after exchanging the dark-squared bishops he wants to drive the knight away from d4 and then increase the pressure on his opponent’s position.

12...♗a5

Threatening 13...♗xc3.

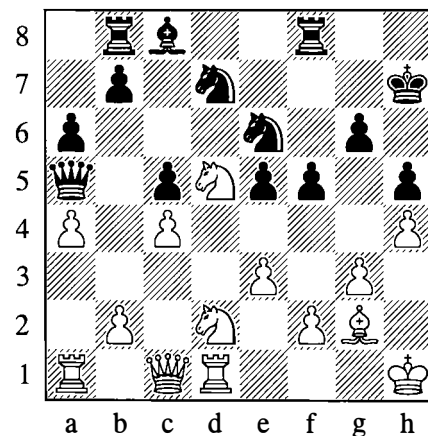
13.♗xg7 ♖xg7 14.♗h1



14...♗b8

Black has a difficult position, as it isn’t clear how he is to develop his queenside. White can answer 14...♘xf3 with either 15.♗xf3 ♘f6 16.♗g5 or 15.exf3, followed by 16.f4.

15.♘d2 a6 16.e3 ♘e6 17.a4 h5 18.h4 f5
19.♘d5 ♖h7



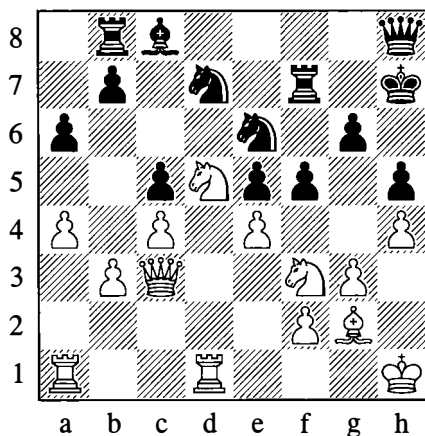
20.b3

Another possibility was 20.b4 cxb4 21.♗b2, but White didn’t want to present his opponent’s pieces with the c5-square.

20...♖f7 21.♟f3 ♜d8 22.♜c3 ♜h8

Black defends stubbornly; 22...e4 would be bad on account of 23.♟e5. But after defending the e5-square Black is ready to play ...e5-e4, considerably improving his position.

23.e4!



Now the game opens up, and all the defects of Black's position stand out in sharp relief. It isn't clear what he is to do about the threat of 24.exf5, or 24.♖e1 with 25.exf5 to follow. On 23...f4, White gains a decisive plus with 24.♟g5† ♟xg5 25.hxg5 fxg3 26.fxg3.

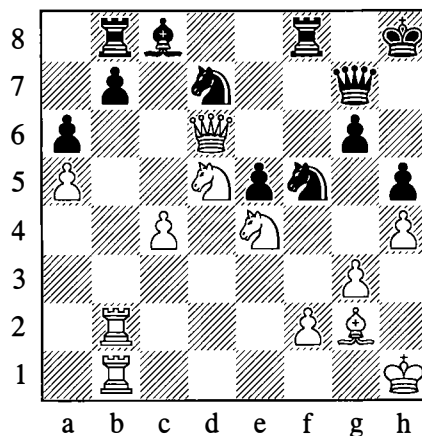
23...fxe4 24.♟d2 ♜g7

Capturing the pawn on f2 would give White possibilities to create direct threats after 25.♖f1.

25.♟xe4 ♟h8 26.♖d2 ♖f8 27.a5 ♟d4 28.b4 cxb4 29.♜xb4 ♟f5 30.♖ad1 ♟d4

Black has no useful moves. Without hurrying, White proceeds to select the target for his decisive blow.

31.♖e1 ♟c6 32.♜a3 ♟d4 33.♖b2 ♟c6 34.♖eb1 ♟d4 35.♜d6 ♟f5



36.♟g5??

This move requires no comment. The comical thing about the blunder is that White leaves his queen *en prise* to his opponent's sole active piece.

36...♟xd6

White resigned.

0-1

GAME 31

Tigran Petrosian – Herman Pilnik

Amsterdam 1956

1.d4 ♟f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 e5 4.♟c3 d6 5.e4 g6 6.♟f3 ♟g7 7.♟g5 ♟a6

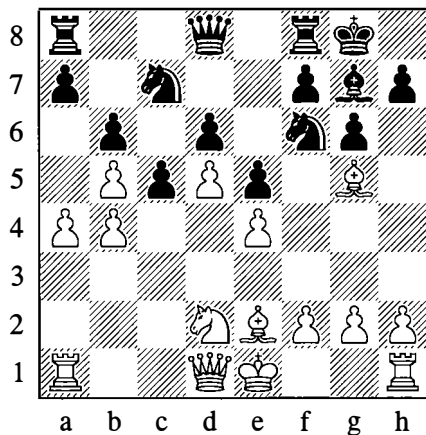
Here 7...h6 was more accurate. White would hardly part with his dark-squared bishop at such an early stage. The bishop on g5 makes it considerably harder for Black to carry out ...f7-f5, which is his basic trump in this position.

8.♟e2 ♟c7 9.♟d2 ♟d7 10.a4 b6 11.♟b5 ♟xb5?

The speed with which Pilnik made this move is a clear indication that he hadn't yet fully grasped the importance of the light-squared bishop for the coming struggle.

The right continuation was 11...♖xb5, or even 11...♙c8.

12.cxb5 0-0 13.b4!



Revealing the defects of Black's position. What is he to do with the c5-pawn? Capturing on b4 would open up the c-file on which White has a strong point – the c6-square. Black wouldn't even be able to oppose rooks on the file, as White's bishop could control the c8-square.

On the other hand bxc5 is quite unpleasant for Black. Recapturing with the b-pawn is obviously bad – White easily creates a strong passed pawn on the queenside. If Black takes on c5 with the d-pawn, White establishes his knight on c4 and combines the threat of a4-a5 with the advance of his passed d-pawn.

13...h6 14.♙xf6

Better than 14.♙e3 ♖d7, when Black continues with 15...cxb4 and brings his knight to c5.

14...♙xf6 15.0-0 ♜fd8 16.♖c4 ♙f8 17.g3 cxb4

White is improving his position without hindrance. Hence after fortifying his d6-pawn, Black captures on b4.

18.♙b3 ♙g7 19.♜fc1

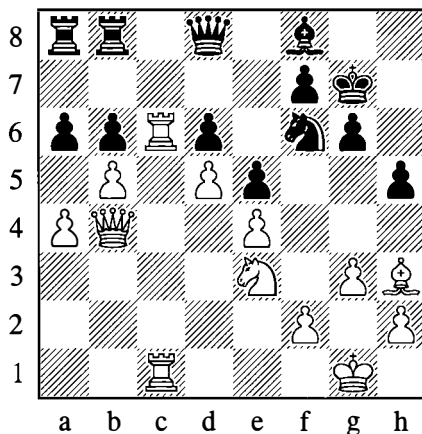
After 19.♙b4 White would have to reckon with the possibility of 19...♖e6, when 20.dxe6 is met by 20...d5.

19...h5 20.♖e3 ♖e8 21.♙xb4 ♜dc8 22.♜c6 ♙d8 23.♜ac1 ♖f6 24.♙f1

If Black could transfer his knight to c5 it would considerably relieve his position. With this move White forestalls 24...♖d7, as after 25.♙h3 and 26.♙xd7 Black is left with the "bad" bishop against a knight.

24...♜cb8 25.♙h3 a6

Relatively the best chance for Black, who is suffering from a catastrophic shortage of moves.



26.♜e1!

Barely comprehensible at first sight, this move is prompted by the following considerations. Black has weakened his pawn on b6, and to attack it White must station his knight on c4; but this cannot be done at once on account of 26...♖xe4. Despite the large quantity of pieces, it turns out that protecting the e4-pawn is not so simple. The obvious-looking 26.f3 has major shortcomings – it weakens the dark squares and the second rank. By continuing 26...axb5 27.axb5 h4, Black would obtain serious counterplay. The bishop

on the h3-c8 diagonal is occupying too strong a post to be switched to the modest role of the e-pawn's guardian.

So all that remains is the move played in the game.

26...axb5 27.axb5 ♖h7 28.♖c4 ♖a2 29.♗g2

Pilnik's last two moves show that he aims to plunge into a desperate counter-attack on the kingside. I ought to mention that similar tactics, coinciding with the approach of the time control, had enabled him to save himself against me in two previous games in Interzonal Tournaments.

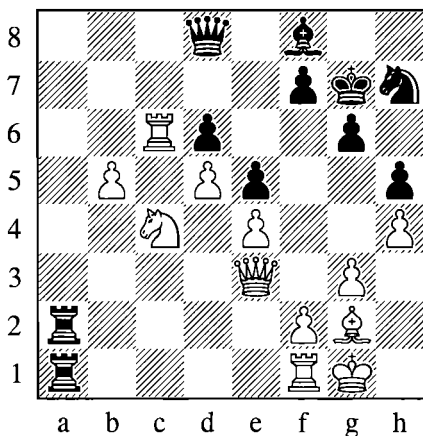
In anticipation of ...♖g5 White withdraws his bishop in good time.

29...♞f6 30.♖f1 ♖g5 31.♞b3 ♖ba8 32.h4 ♖h7 33.♖xb6 ♖a1 34.♖c6 ♖8a2 35.♞e3

Defending against the threat of 35...♞xf2†.

35...♞d8

Black's threats are repulsed, and he sounds the retreat.



36.♖xa1

The immediate 36.b6 would have won more quickly.

36...♖xa1† 37.♖h2 ♖f6 38.f3 ♞b8 39.♞b3 ♖d7 40.b6 ♖c5 41.♞b2 ♖a4 42.♞b5 ♖a2

43.♖c7 g5 44.♖e3

Simplest. The knight reaches f5, and the black king is exposed to a mating attack.

44...gxf4 45.♖f5† ♖g8 46.gxf4 ♖a6 47.b7 ♖a7 48.♖c8 ♞xb7 49.♞e8 ♖d7 50.♖xd6

Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 32

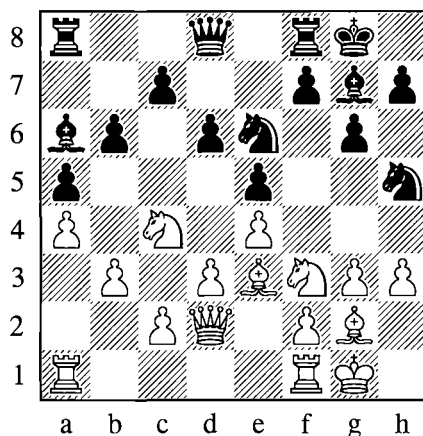
Miroslav Filip – Tigran Petrosian

Amsterdam 1956

1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.g3 d6 3.♗g2 e5 4.d3 g6 5.0-0 ♗g7 6.e4

Filip opts for a King's Indian Attack formation. I often play the white side of this opening myself, which is why the decision Filip takes is not justified; he has to conduct the fight in unfamiliar conditions while I feel at ease.

6...0-0 7.♖bd2 ♖bd7 8.a4 a5 9.♖c4 ♖c5 10.♗e3 ♖e6 11.h3 b6 12.♞d2 ♗a6 13.b3 ♖h5



It becomes clear that Black has achieved the more rational deployment of his forces. The threat of ...f7-f5, combined with ...♗xc4 as

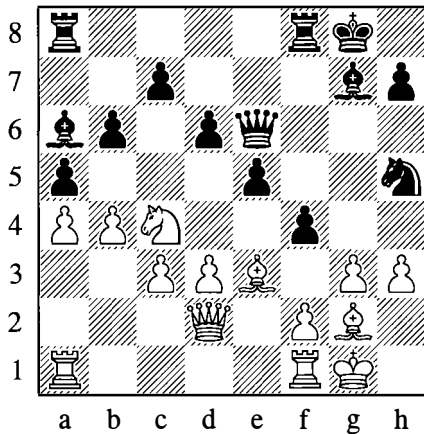
appropriate, compels Filip to undertake active operations.

14.c3 ♖e7

Of course not 14...f5 15.exf5 gxf5 16.♟g5.

15.b4 f5! 16.exf5 gxf5 17.♟g5 f4! 18.♜xe6 ♖xe6

Not 18...fxe3 19.♜xe3, when 19...♖xe6 fails to 20.♙d5.



19.b5

This is the point of White's play. I was intending to meet 19.♖e2 with 19...♙xc4 (better than 19...fxe3 20.♜xe3), when 20.dxc4 e4 leaves Black with no worries. Against the stronger 20.♙xa8 it would hardly pay to play 20...♙xd3, which only justifies itself in the case of 21.♖xh5 fxe3. However, 20.♙xa8 is refuted by the simple 20...♙xa8 21.♖xh5 ♙xd3 22.♙fd1 ♙c2 (not 22...e4? 23.gxf4 ♙xc3 24.♙a1 axb4 25.♙h2, which owing to the threats of ♙g1† and ♙xc3 is fairly unpleasant for Black). There could follow 23.♙dc1 ♙g6 24.♖f3 e4 25.♖xf4 axb4, to Black's advantage.

Considering that the move played was also to lead to a plus for Black, the question to be asked is why White obtained the worse game without having made a single discernible error. It happened because he didn't link

the development of his pieces to a clear-cut middlegame plan.

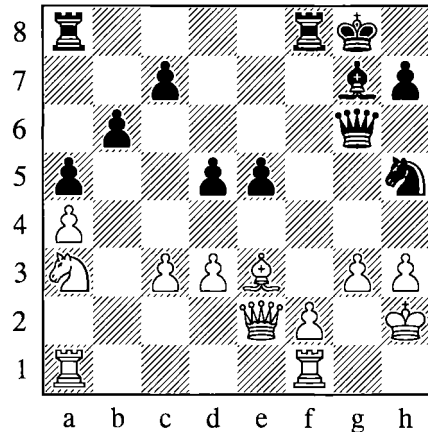
19...f3 20.bxa6 fxe2 21.♙xg2

The complications have ended in Black's favour, seeing that White's pawn formation has been weakened and his knight is driven into a bad position.

21...d5 22.♜a3 ♙xa6 23.♖e2 ♖g6 24.♙h2

A better move was 24.♖g4. Now Black brings his last inactive piece into the fray, and White's position becomes critical.

24...♙aa8



25.♜c2?

He could resist more stubbornly by playing 25.♙ae1 followed by 26.♜b1, so that from d2 the knight could take an active part in the defence.

25...♙ae8 26.♙ae1 c5 27.♙g1 ♜f6?

There was an immediate win with 27...d4 28.♙d2 c4.

28.♖d2 d4 29.cxd4 cxd4 30.♙g5 ♜d5 31.♙g2

This loses by force. He could have retained more chances with 31.♙e4, allowing the d-pawn to be defended by ♜e1.

31...♖f3 32.♗e4 ♘c3 33.♗g4 h5 34.♗h4
♗xd3 35.♖c1 ♗d1 36.♖b2 ♗b1

White resigned.

0-1

In the interests of participating in the World Championship cycle, Petrosian had missed the 23rd USSR Championship which was held at the start of 1956; so he had to enter the following Championship at the semi-final stage. To “readjust” himself to the Soviet ambience, he played in the Championship of Moscow, sharing first and second places with Vladimir Simagin whom he defeated in the play-off match.

The 24th USSR Championship Semi-Final in Tbilisi took place in December. The home advantage obliged Petrosian to play uncompromisingly, and he didn’t disappoint his local supporters. Eight wins, plus two “walkovers” against players who dropped out, secured him first place, two points ahead of Furman. It was here in Tbilisi that Mikhail Tal “shone” for the first time. A strong finish to the Semi-Final, followed by a sequence of four victories at the start of the Final, testified to the rise of a new star above the chess horizon.

GAME 33

Tigran Petrosian – Vladimir Simagin

Moscow (5) 1956

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 c6 3.♘c3 d6 4.d4 g6 5.e4
♗g7 6.♗e2 0-0 7.0-0 ♗g4

Simagin had adopted roughly the same method of development in the game Geller – Simagin, Moscow 1952.

8.♗e3 ♘bd7 9.♘d2 ♗xe2 10.♖xe2 e5

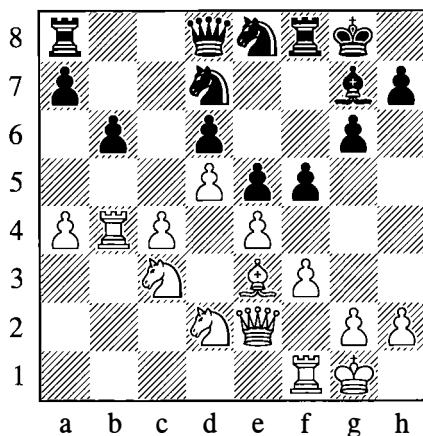
Against the possible 10...e6, which aims to set up the pawns on light squares after 11...d5,

I intended 11.f4 d5 12.e5, giving White a large spatial plus.

11.d5 c5 12.♗ab1

As the course of the game was to show, this plan is inferior to the usual a2-a3 with b2-b4 to follow.

12...♘e8 13.f3 f5 14.b4 cxb4 15.♗xb4 b6
16.a4



16...♗f6!

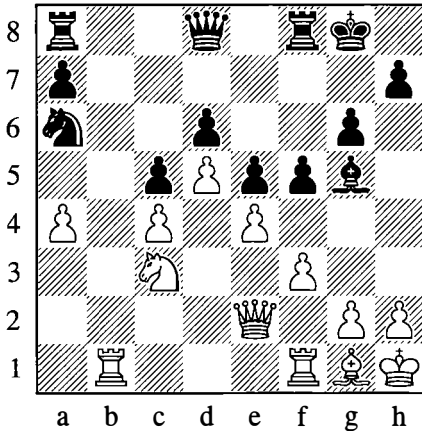
The correct treatment of the position! If Black had played in the stereotyped manner with 16...f4 followed by pushing the g-pawn, White would have had good counterplay on the queenside. Instead, Black doesn’t hurry with ...f5-f4 but brings his bishop out into the open; on g5 it will occupy an active position, whereas after the immediate 16...f4 it could easily have become “bad”. It must be observed that White is compelled to avoid an exchange of dark-squared bishops, so as not to leave Black with complete control of the c5-square.

17.♗h1 ♗g5 18.♗g1 ♘c7

Black would have a highly attractive position after 18...♘ef6. White would then start to have worries about his e4-pawn, seeing that capturing on f5 is not part of his plans in the present situation.

19.♖bb1 ♖a6 20.♜b3 ♜dc5 21.♜xc5 bxc5?

Black has carried out the plan he started with his 18th move. If he can get in ...♜b4, his opponent will find himself in a bad position.



22.exf5! gxf5

Black can't prevent White from seizing the e4-square, so 22...♖xf5 would probably have been better, slowing the growth of White's initiative.

23.g4! fxg4 24.♜e4 ♙f4

After 24...gxf3 25.♖xf3 White's attack more than compensates for the sacrificed pawn.

25.♖b7 ♜c7

Bringing his knight across to e8 as a matter of urgency, Black covers the most vulnerable points in his position – the pawn on d6 and the f6-square.

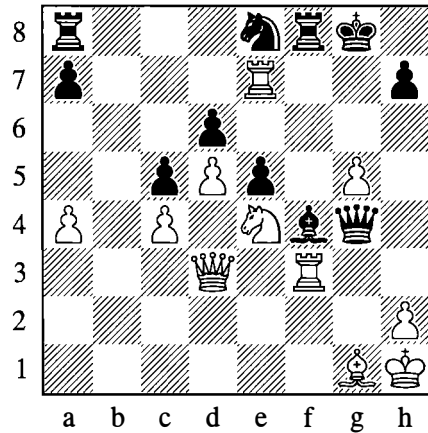
26.fxg4 ♜e8 27.g5

A move that suggested itself was 27.♙e3, to remove the black bishop from f4. In that case Black would defend with 27...♖c8, when 28.♖e7 fails to 28...♙e3.

27...♖c8 28.♖e7 ♖h3

Activating the queen is Black's best chance.

29.♖f3 ♖g4 30.♖d3



Against the threatened 31.♜xd6 or 31.♖h3, there is no satisfactory defence.

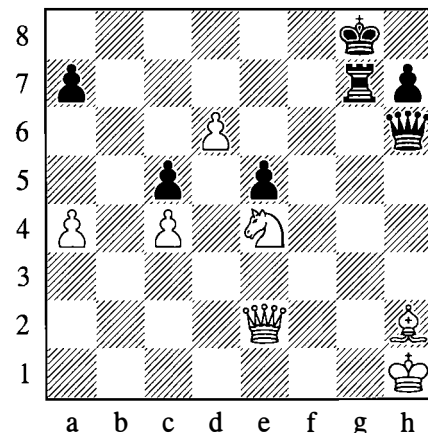
30...♙xh2 31.♖xf8† ♜xf8 32.♖xe8† ♖xe8 33.♙xh2 ♖e7 34.♜xd6 ♖xg5 35.♖f1† ♜g8 36.♜e4

When making his 35th move White was first intending to exchange queens with 36.♖g1, but he then decided to place his knight on e4 with tempo.

36...♖h4

The only move that allows Black to evade a queen exchange and angle for some practical chances. With White in mild time trouble, this try very nearly succeeds.

37.♖e2 ♖g7 38.d6 ♖h6



39. ♖d1?

The right move was 39. ♖f1, as after the text move 39... ♗h3 would have given quite good saving chances.

39... ♗h4? 40. ♖e2 ♗h6 41. ♖f1

The sealed move.

41... ♗f7

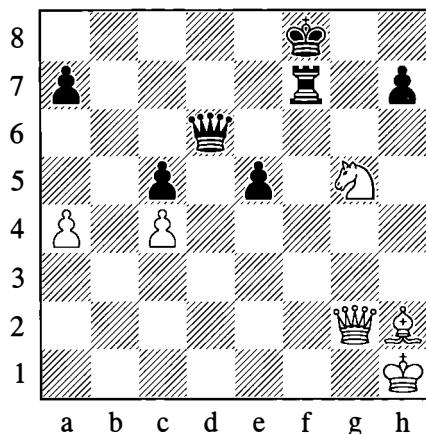
Adjournment analysis showed that Black would quickly have lost with 41... ♖e3 42. ♖f6† ♜h8 43. d7 ♗d4 44. ♙xe5 ♗h4† 45. ♙h2 ♗d4 46. ♗e1.

42. ♗g2† ♜f8

The only move. White wins by force in the event of 42... ♗g7 43. d7, and now 43... ♖b6 44. ♖f6†, or 43... ♖c1† 44. ♙g1 ♗h6† 45. ♗h2 ♖b6 46. ♗h4.

43. ♖g5 ♗xd6?

This leads to an amusing finale. The best move in the position was 43... ♗d7.



44. ♖a8† ♜g7 45. ♙xe5† ♗xe5 46. ♗h8† ♜xh8 47. ♖xf7†

Black resigned.

1-0

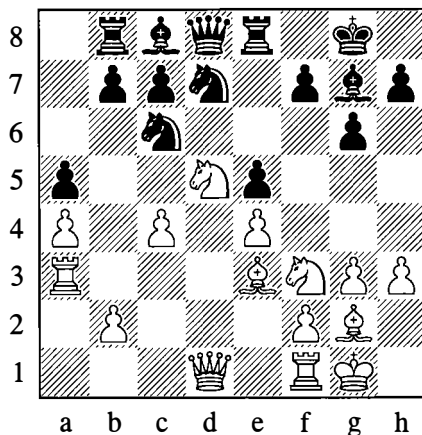
GAME 34**Lev Polugaevsky – Tigran Petrosian**

Tbilisi 1956

1. d4 ♖f6 2. ♖f3 g6 3. c4 ♙g7 4. g3 0-0 5. ♙g2 d6 6. 0-0 a6 7. ♖c3 ♖c6 8. h3 ♗b8 9. a4 a5

Another possibility is 9... ♖a5.

10. e4 e5 11. ♙e3 ♖d7 12. ♖d5 ♗e8 13. dxe5 dxe5 14. ♗a3



White intends 15. ♗d3, after which Black's pieces will be deprived of their scope for manoeuvre.

14... ♖b4! 15. ♗d2

After 15. ♖xb4 axb4 16. ♗d3 ♗e7 Black has a good position, but now it isn't so easy for him to find the right move (15... ♖xd5 16. cxd5 leads to an obvious plus for White).

15... ♖f6

My most difficult move in the game.

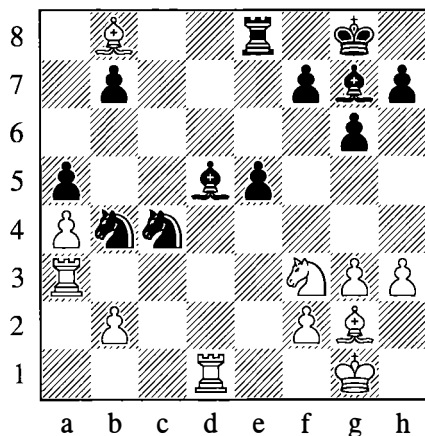
16. ♙g5 ♙e6

A dubious line would be 16... ♖xe4 17. ♙xd8 ♖xd2 18. ♙xc7 ♖xc4 19. ♙xb8 ♙e6 20. ♖c7.

17.♞d1?

A mistake that loses the game; 17.♞c3 was better.

17...♜xe4 18.♙xd8 ♜xd2 19.♙xc7 ♜xc4
20.♙xb8 ♙xd5



As a result of his exchanging combination, Black has attained an overwhelming position.

21.♙a7 e4 22.♜g5

A desperate move. If 22.♜e1, then 22...♙c6 is very strong.

22...h6 23.♞b3 ♙c6

Better than 23...hxg5 24.♞xb4.

24.♜xe4 ♙xa4

The shortest route to victory. Black regains the exchange and picks up the white b-pawn.

25.♞xb4 axb4 26.b3 ♙xb3 27.♞b1 ♜b2
28.♜d6 ♞e7 29.♙c5 ♙c2 30.♞a1 ♜a4
31.♞xa4 ♙xa4 32.♙xb4 ♙c6 33.♙f1 ♞d7
34.♜c4 ♙b5 35.♜b6 ♞d1

White resigned.

0-1

Chapter 5

1957-1958

In the final of the 24th USSR Championship in Moscow, a new Petrosian appeared. Panov, who had so sharply criticized Tigran's play in the 22nd Championship, was this time unstinting in his praise: "It must be observed that Grandmaster Petrosian, who in past tournaments would often play short draws, has completely reformed himself in the present Championship, and in spite of his loss to Furman in the first round he is striving to create sharp and complex positions. As a result of this full-blooded fighting he is now only just behind the leaders. Considering the young Grandmaster's coolness, persistence and high level of technique, we can have no doubt that he will be one of the top finishers." Indeed in the next two rounds Petrosian lived up to this prognosis by winning both games, but after that he lost to Tal and Korchnoi and had to settle for sharing 7th-8th places. He can hardly have been satisfied. He had 7 victories to his name, but also 4 defeats, which was rather too many for the cautious Tigran; in later Soviet Championships he didn't let it happen again.

In the summer of 1957 Petrosian played in the second USSR – Yugoslavia match (the first had taken place in 1956). Despite a modest start – a win against Trifunovic and a loss to Gligoric – he managed to score 5 points from 8 games.

As from 1957, European Team Championships began to be held. In the first of them, Petrosian played on board 6 and achieved a good result (+3 –0 =2).

GAME 35

Alexander Tolush – Tigran Petrosian

Moscow 1957

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.c3 ♘f6 4.d4 d6

This ancient opening is seen so rarely in modern tournament practice that it's difficult to discuss which of the plans is most effective in the initial stage. With the continuation he chooses in this game, Black is trying to steer the struggle into the paths of the Ruy Lopez or the King's Indian Defence. The former would arise after 5.♗b5 ♗d7; a set-up belonging to the latter is seen in the game itself.

We should note that White gains nothing from 5.dxe5 ♘xe5 6.♘xe5 dxe5 7.♖xd8† ♖xd8 8.♗c4 ♘xe4! 9.♗xf7 ♗c5! 10.0–0 ♖f8.

5.d5

A committal decision; 5.♘b5 should have been preferred.

5...♖b8 6.♘d3 g6 7.h3 ♖bd7 8.♙e3 ♘g7 9.♖bd2

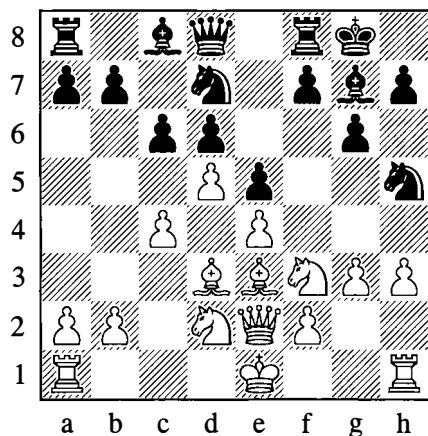
A more natural continuation would be 9.c4 followed by ♖c3, after which a customary King's Indian formation arises.

9...♗h5 10.g3 0-0 11.♙e2

The cause of subsequent difficulties. The queen is badly placed on this square; 11.♙c2 would be better, with c3-c4 to follow – though Black would still have a comfortable game after ...c7-c6.

11...c6 12.c4

Of course it would not pay White to play 12.dxc6 bxc6; the move in the game is essentially forced.



12...c5!

After the routine 12...cxd5? 13.cxd5, the manoeuvre ♖c4 would give White excellent prospects on the queenside.

13.0-0-0?

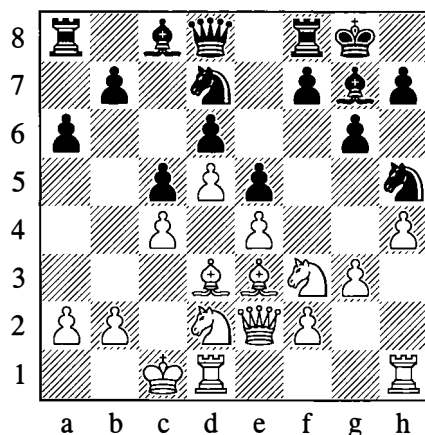
This allows Black to carry out an advantageous tactical operation. White should have continued with 13.♗f1, and only then 0-0-0.

13...a6

Here Black misses the chance to play 13...♗f4!, when there could follow, for example, 14.gxf4 exf4 15.♘xf4 ♙f6 16.e5 ♙xf4 17.exd6 ♗f6 18.♙e5 ♗h5 with a clear plus. White in turn fails to make use of his opponent's mistake.

14.h4?

Here 14.♗dg1! is a good deal stronger, preserving quite good hopes of counterplay – seeing that 14...b5 would bring Black nothing substantial for the moment.



14...♗f4!

Black now has a strategically won position.

15.gxf4 exf4 16.♘xf4

Perhaps 16.♗dg1 fxe3 17.♙xe3 would have been a little better, covering the dark squares in the centre.

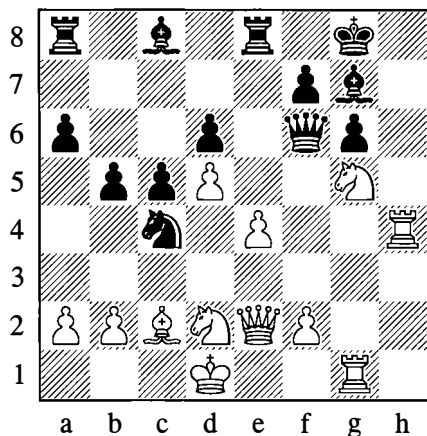
16...♙f6 17.♗dg1 ♙xf4 18.h5 b5 19.hxg6

Nothing good for White would come of 19.♗h4 ♙f6 20.♗g5 h6!.

19...hxg6 20.♗d1

The king has to be removed from c1 in any event. Black would, for example, meet 20.♗g5 with 20...bxc5 21.♘xc4 ♗e5!, working up an overwhelming attack.

20...♖f6 21.♘g5 ♜e8 22.♞h4 ♜b6 23.♙c2
♜xc4



24.e5!?

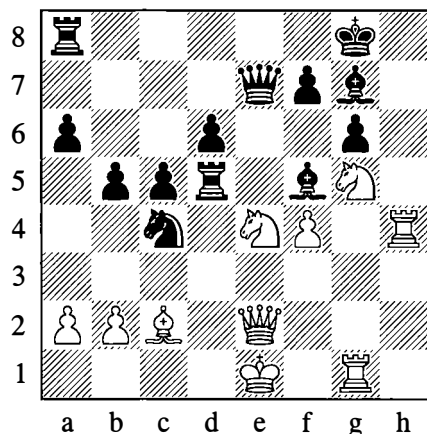
A notable attempt to muddy the waters. Realizing that the position is lost in any case, White steers towards great complications.

24...♞xc5 25.♜de4 ♖e7

The tempting 25...♞xd5† 26.♜e1 ♖xb2 would be refuted by 27.♜f6† ♖xf6 28.♖e8† ♙f8 29.♞h8†!, and mate next move.

26.f4 ♞xd5† 27.♜e1 ♙f5

Black could also win by 27...f6!.



28.♞gh1

Setting up the threat of 29.♞h8†! ♙xh8 30.♞xh8† ♜xh8 31.♖h2†, mating.

28...♞d2

Or 28...f6, which is also adequate to win. Now 29.♜xd2 ♖xe2† 30.♜xe2 is bad in view of 30...♞e8†!. White tries to make use of his last chance.

29.♖f3 f6

If 29...♞xc2, then 30.♞h8† ♙xh8 31.♞xh8† ♜xh8 32.♖h1†, and Black is mated!

30.♜f1 fxg5 31.♜f6† ♖xf6 32.♖xa8† ♜f7 33.♞h8 ♙d3†

White resigned.

0-1

GAME 36

Tigran Petrosian – Petar Trifunovic

Leningrad 1957

1.e4

You don't often have cause to annotate the very first move of a game. Very well then, let me break with tradition.

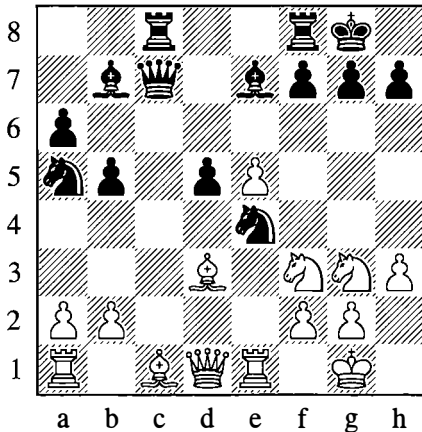
It was Grandmaster Borislav Ivkov who spurred me to make the "risky" move of the king's pawn. A few days before the match, he had published an article in which he analysed the styles of the opponents who were going to take part. In particular, Ivkov wrote: "Petrosian never starts the game with 1.e4." His categorical assertion gave me the idea of playing this opening move – which was "foreign" to me – in my first game with White in our amicable contest.

1...e5 2.♜f3 ♜c6 3.♙b5 a6

Not to be outdone, Trifunovic comes up with some surprises of his own. I knew that he very rarely adopted the classical Chigorin

System, but on this occasion we set sail on that very course.

4.♘a4 ♖f6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♞e1 b5 7.♙b3 d6
8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♘a5 10.♙c2 c5 11.d4 ♞c7
12.♘bd2 ♙b7 13.♘f1 cxd4 14.cxd4 ♞ac8
15.♙d3 d5 16.dxe5 ♘xe4 17.♘g3



Since the well-known game Ravinsky – Panov, Moscow 1947, this position has been seen many a time in a variety of contests. In games where Black has sacrificed a pawn with 17...f5 18.exf6 ♙xf6 19.♙xe4 dxe4 20.♘xe4, he has managed to obtain definite compensation. It is true, though, that according to the latest theoretical investigations Black's counterplay remains insufficient for equality.

17...♙b4

This move came as a complete surprise to me. No one had played this way before. As Trifunovic told me after the game, the variation initiated by this thrust had not at all been thought up in the quiet of home study; he had devised it right here at the board.

18.♞e2 f5

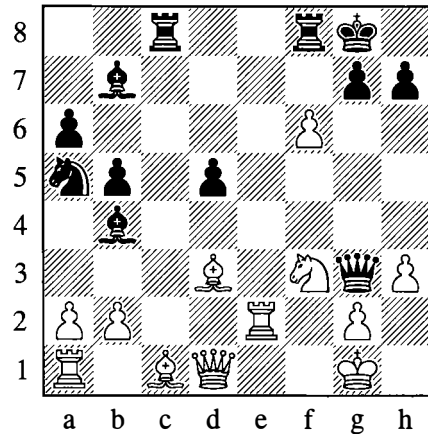
Setting White the problem of whether or not to capture on f6.

[Ed. note: A critical move which allows White to develop a dangerous attack. It was worth considering 18...♘g3 19.fxg3 ♘c4 or 19...g6.]

19.exf6!

After lengthy thought I resolved on this move, for otherwise the knight on e4, supported by the pawns on d5 and f5, could give White plenty of worries.

19...♘g3 20.fxg3 ♞xg3



At first sight the situation looks very dangerous for White. He should be losing the pawn on f6, as 21.fxg7 fails to 21...♞xf3. Black cannot be stopped from transferring his bishop to d6, while the knight on f3 – the defender of the h2-point – will be open to attack along the f-file or, when the black d-pawn advances, along the h1-a8 diagonal. White needs to take resolute measures, and above all quick ones.

21.♙f5!

Trifunovic didn't expect this powerful move. The amusing thing is that throughout the game we keep exchanging surprises that are none too pleasant for the side on the receiving end. The Yugoslav Grandmaster took an hour and twenty minutes over his reply.

21...d4

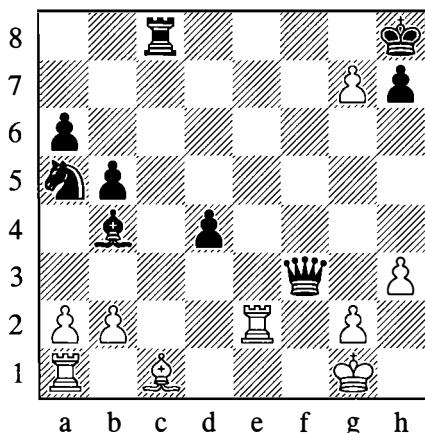
This meets with a fairly simple refutation. The tasks for White would be more difficult after 21...♞c7, although 22.♞d3! still secures him a plus – for instance, 22...gxf6 23.♙h6.

22.♙e6†

It seems to me that the continuation White chooses gives Black fewer possibilities than he would have after 22.♙xc8 ♜xc8. (In place of 22...♜xc8, Black does badly with 22...♙xf3 23.♙e6† ♖h8 24.♚d3, and now 24...♜xf6 25.♙g4 or 24...♙d6 25.♚xf3 ♚h2† 26.♖f1 ♜xf6 27.♙f5 g6 28.♙h6.)

22...♖h8 23.♙xc8 ♙xf3 24.♚d3!

After this, Black's position is lost.

24...♜xc8 25.♚xf3 ♚xf3 26.♙g7†**26...♖xg7**

White would have rather more in the way of difficulties after 26...♖g8. But even then, the natural 27.gxf3 d3 28.♙g2 ♖c4 29.♙g5 would lead to victory.

[Ed. note: Black doesn't succeed in utilizing his passed pawn. On 29...d2 which looks obvious, White has 30.♖f1, preventing 30...♜e8 (in view of 31.♜e2) and threatening to pick up the d-pawn after driving the minor pieces back. For example: 30...♜c5!? 31.a3 ♙a5 (31...♜d5 32.♜d1 ♙a5 33.b3±) 32.b4 ♜d5 33.♜d1, and White wins the d2-pawn (33...♙b6 34.♙xd2 ♙e3 35.♖e1±, or 33...♙d8 34.♙xd2 ♖e3† 35.♙xe3 ♜xd1† 36.♖e2±).]

27.gxf3 d3 28.♙g2† ♖f6 29.♙g5† ♖f5**30.♜d1**

The queenside has awoken from its slumbers. The rest is a matter of uncomplicated technique.

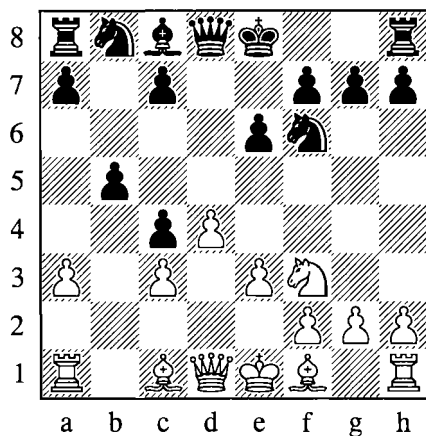
30...♜c2 31.h4 d2 32.♙xd2 ♜xb2 33.♙g5† ♖e6 34.♜e1† ♖f6 35.♙xb4 ♜xb4 36.♜e4 ♜b2 37.♜f4† ♖e6 38.♜e4† ♖f6 39.♙g2 ♜b1† 40.♖h2 ♖c4 41.♙ge2 a5 42.♜f4† ♖g6 43.♙g2† ♖h5 44.♜f5† ♖h6 45.f4 ♖e3 46.♜f6† ♖h5 47.♙g5† ♖xh4 48.♜h6#

GAME 37**Tigran Petrosian – Nikola Karaklajic**

Leningrad 1957

1.c4 ♖f6 2.♖c3 e6 3.♖f3 d5 4.d4 ♙b4 5.a3

The usual continuations 5.♙g5, 5.e3 and 5.♚a4† have been the object of much study. The move in the game leads to sharp play.

5...♙xc3† 6.bxc3 dxc4 7.e3 b5**8.a4**

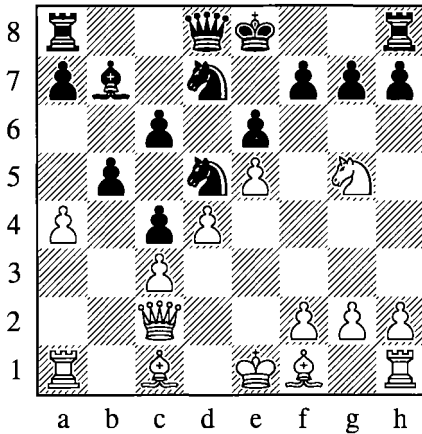
Played in time. Otherwise, after ...♙b7, Black wouldn't need to weaken the d6-point but could answer a3-a4 with ...a7-a6.

8...c6 9.♚c2

White's strategic plan is simple. He wants to push his e-pawn to e5 and bring his knight to e4.

9...♖bd7 10.e4 ♗b7 11.e5 ♘d5 12.♘g5

White's cavalry raid is too impetuous, and comes up against an energetic counter-attack from his better developed opponent. He should have played 12.♗e2.



12...♖a5! 13.♗b2

On 13.♗d2 Black could continue with 13...h6 14.♘e4 0-0, when the threat of ...f7-f6 is fairly unpleasant. Now he has no choice, given the possibility of 14.axb5 or 14.♘e4.

13...b4

Battle is joined in the sector of the board where Black is stronger.

14.♗xc4 bxc3

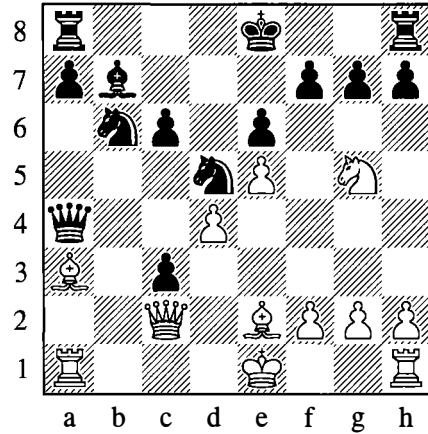
White's game would be more difficult to play after 14...♘c3, whereas now his dark-squared bishop on the a3-f8 diagonal considerably increases his tactical possibilities.

15.♗a3 ♘7b6

The move that suggested itself was 15...♗a6. After 16.♘e4 Black could not of course play 16...♗xc4 on account of 17.♘d6† winning the queen, but by continuing 16...♘7b6 17.♘d6†

♘d7 he would have acquired a dangerous initiative.

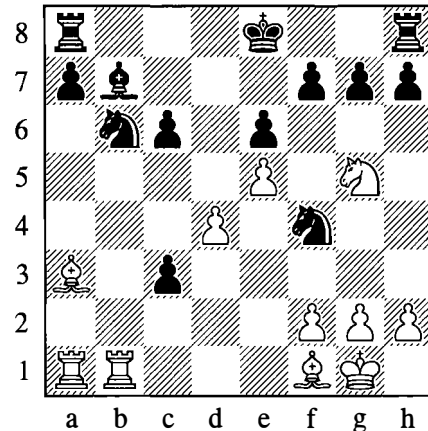
16.♗e2 ♖xa4



17.♖xa4

White is two pawns down, yet he is happy to exchange queens. Hanging over Black's head like the sword of Damocles, the threat to bring the knight to d6 greatly restricts his scope. White, it should be noted, is not in a hurry with this manoeuvre, since g5 is also a strong position for his knight.

17...♘xa4 18.0-0 ♘ab6 19.♗f1 ♘f4? 20.♗f1

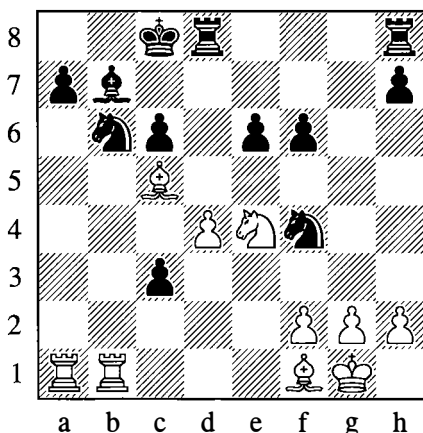


20...f5?

It emerges that Black's correct 18th move was linked to the wrong plan. The attempt to shut the knight off from e4 fails in its aim, while in the black position a new weakness arises – the pawn on f6.

Black accords too much importance to his opponent's threat and underestimates his own chances: 19...a5! 20.♖c5 ♕a6! would have placed the initiative in his hands.

21.exf6 gxf6 22.♖e4 0–0–0 23.♖c5!



A distinct plus for White is taking shape. With his next move he will pick up a pawn on a7 or f6. The pawn on c3 is also doomed. White thus has the pleasant prospect of recovering his missing pawns while retaining all his positional assets.

23...♗b8 24.♖xf6 ♖fd5 25.♖e4 ♖hg8 26.♖c1 ♖ge8 27.♖d6† ♗a8 28.g3

Unfortunately, after 28.♖xa7† ♗xa7 29.♖a1†, Black has 29...♖a4 (on 29...♖a6, the continuation would be 30.♖xa6† ♗b7 31.♖c5† ♗c8 32.♖a8†! ♖xa8 33.♖a6#).

28...♖d7 29.♖a3 ♖7b6 30.♖ca1 ♖c8 31.♖e5 ♖d7 32.♖g2

Of course there is no particular need for this

or White's next move, but he has no reason to hurry.

32...h5 33.h4 ♖f8 34.♖xc3 ♖db6 35.♖f1 ♖df7 36.♖e4 ♖d7

The simplest answer to 36...c5 is 37.♖g5.

37.♖d6 ♖xd6

A time-trouble blunder that hastens the inevitable denouement.

38.♖xd6

In this hopeless position, Black overstepped the time limit.

1–0

GAME 38

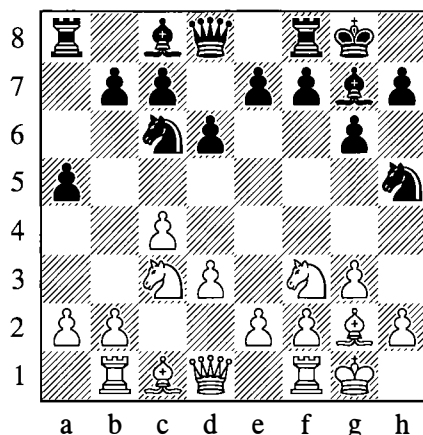
Vasja Pirc – Tigran Petrosian

Leningrad 1957

1.c4 g6 2.♖c3 ♖g7 3.g3 ♖f6 4.♖g2 0–0 5.d3 d6 6.♖f3 ♖c6 7.0–0 a5

White's plan is to prepare a pawn offensive on the queenside with ♖b1 and b2–b4. Therefore with this last move Black takes prophylactic measures.

8.♖b1 ♖h5



9.♖e1!

In an analogous position in his game with Boleslavsky, Pirc had played 9.♔d2, but by pushing his f-pawn to f4 Boleslavsky seized the initiative. This time Pirc finds the correct continuation.

9...f5 10.f4

Black now has difficulty undertaking active operations on the kingside, while on the queenside and in the centre White's chances are pleasanter.

10...e5 11.♔d2 ♖e8

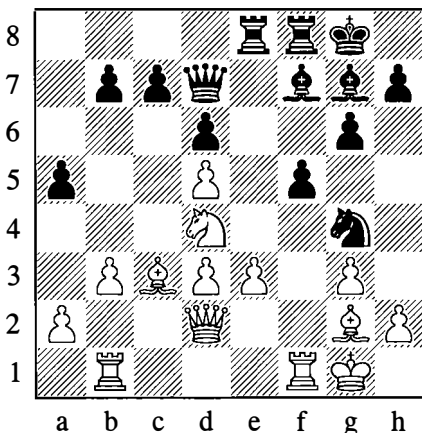
This leads to a loss of time. He ought to have centralized his forces by ...♖f6, ...♔e6, ...♗d7 and ...♗ae8.

12.e3 ♖f6 13.♖d5 ♔e6 14.b3 ♗d7 15.♖c2 exf4

Liquidating the tension between the centre pawns, Black intends a regrouping of his forces.

16.♖xf4 ♔f7 17.♔c3 ♖f8 18.♗d2 ♗ae8 19.♖d5 ♖xd5 20.cxd5 ♖e5 21.♖d4

Black would meet 21.♔xa5 with 21...♗a8, threatening 22...b6 or 22...♖xd3.

21...♖g4**22.♗be1?**

A mistake that hands the initiative over to Black. The right idea was to go to e1 with the other rook, so that afterwards Black's thrust with 23...♗b5 could be answered by 24.a4.

22...♔h6 23.♖c2 ♗b5 24.h3 ♖e5 25.d4?

Another mistake. White had to play 25.♗d1, after which 25...♔xd5 would fail to 26.♖d4 ♗c5 27.b4.

25...♖d7 26.♗e2 ♗xe2 27.♗xe2 ♖f6

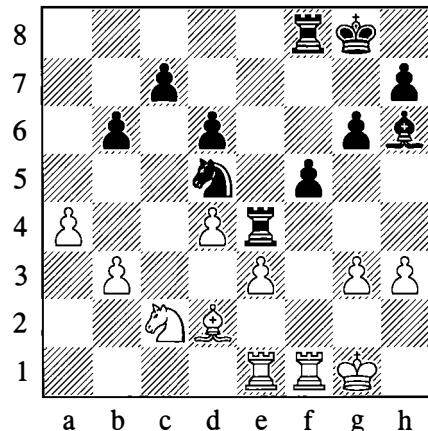
The ending that has come about is clearly in Black's favour. The pawn on d5 is doomed, but winning it without giving up the a-pawn in return would not have been possible, for example: 27...b6 28.g4 fxg4 29.hxg4 ♔g5 30.♔f3, with e3-e4 to follow.

28.♔xa5 b6

Here 28...♗a8 29.♔xc7 ♖e8 30.♔b6 ♗a6 looks stronger, but after 31.♔d8! Black achieves nothing.

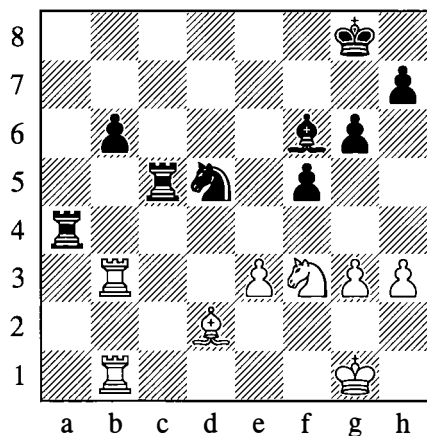
29.♔d2 ♔xd5 30.♔xd5† ♖xd5 31.a4

This new weakening quickly makes itself felt, but then White had a difficult position already.

31...♗e4 32.♗e1

32...c5! 33.dxc5 dxc5 34.♖f2 c4 35.♗b1 cxb3

36.♖xb3 ♜xa4 37.♖fb1 ♜c8 38.♜e1 ♙g7
39.♙g1 ♜c5 40.♜f3 ♙f6



At this stage the game was adjourned. With an extra pawn and his pieces well placed, Black's win is a question of time and technique.

41.♖b5 ♙e7 42.♖5b3 ♜f7 43.♙e1 ♙f6
44.♜f1 g5 45.♙d2 ♜g6 46.♖d3 g4 47.hxg4
fxg4 48.♜d4 ♙xd4 49.exd4 ♜c7 50.♖e1
♖f7† 51.♜g2

White could have resisted for longer after 51.♜g1.

51...♖a2 52.♖e6† ♖f6 53.♖e5

This leads to immediate loss, but White's position was hopeless in any case.

53...♜b4

White resigned.

0-1

GAME 39

Jan Sefc – Tigran Petrosian

Vienna 1957

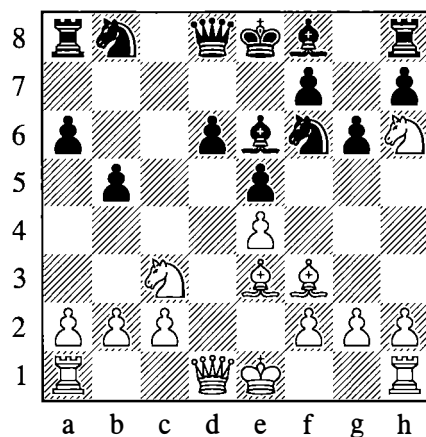
1.e4 c5 2.♜f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♜xd4 ♜f6
5.♜c3 d6 6.♙e2 a6 7.♙e3 b5?

Striking out in this way at such an early stage is rightly considered premature. But I felt like getting away from well studied positions quickly.

8.♙f3 e5 9.♜f5

Of course 9.♜b3 is also good.

9...g6 10.♜h6 ♙e6



11.♜g4!

White is implementing a simple positional idea – to exchange off all the black pieces that control d5, and then to take possession of that square.

11...♜g8

This “ugly” move, withdrawing the knight to its starting square, is the one that responds best to the demands of the position. A worse choice would be 11...♜fd7 12.♜d5, when 12...h5 is unplayable owing to 13.♙b6 ♜xb6 14.♜gf6†.

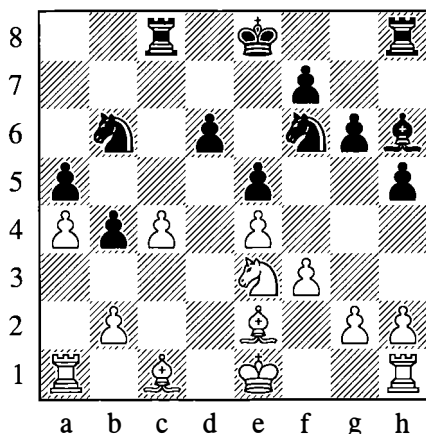
12.♜d5

At this point the simplest way for White to acquire an opening edge would be 12.♙c1 followed by 13.♜ge3, completing the manoeuvre he started with his 10th move.

12...♜d7 13.♙c1 ♙xd5 14.♙xd5 h5 15.♜e3
♜gf6 16.♙c6?

After this, Black is out of the woods. Probably what troubled White about other queen moves was the lack of solid protection for his e4-pawn, which has suddenly somehow begun to feel a little uncomfortable in view of a possible knight sortie to c5. Yet by simply playing 16.♖d1 and meeting 16...♗c5 with 17.♗d5, White would be indirectly defending the e-pawn and preserving his opening advantage.

16...♖c8 17.♖xc8† ♜xc8 18.a4 b4 19.♙e2 a5 20.f3 ♗b6 21.c4 ♙h6!



As a result of White's serious lapse on move 16, the struggle has taken on a character favourable to Black. The dark squares in White's camp have been weakened, and there is little activity for his light-squared bishop.

22.b3 ♗fd7 23.♗f2 ♗c5 24.♜b1 h4 25.♜d1 ♜c6

A somewhat artificial move, which doesn't however spoil anything, seeing that White is condemned to passive defence; 25...♗d7 was simpler.

26.♙d3 ♙f4 27.h3

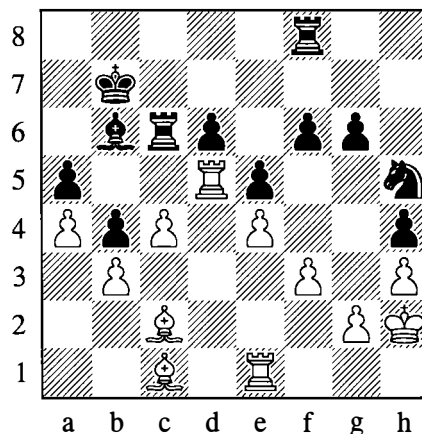
Firmly believing in the impregnability of his position, White allows a further weakening of the dark squares. It is true that Black cannot

demolish the white position by bringing his knights to f4 and d4. He therefore embarks on some lengthy manoeuvring. He transfers his pieces to their most effective posts, and after that he endeavours to exchange the dark-squared bishops and prepare the ...f7-f5 break – for without opening at least one file for his rooks, Black can scarcely count on success.

27...♗bd7 28.♙c2 ♗f8 29.♙b2 ♗fe6 30.♗d5 ♙g5 31.♗f1 ♜f8 32.♜e1 ♗d7

Black gains nothing from 32...♗d4 33.♙xd4 exd4 34.♗e2.

33.♜bd1 ♗c8 34.♗f2 ♗b7 35.♗e3 ♗f4 36.♗d5 ♗h5 37.♗e3 ♙d8 38.♗d5 ♗e6 39.♗g1 ♗ef4 40.♙c1 ♗xd5 41.♜xd5 ♙b6† 42.♗h2 f6



43.♙e3?

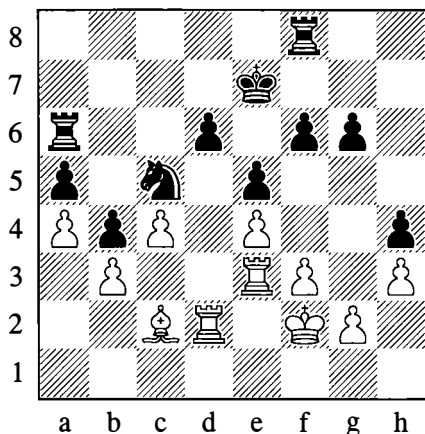
A fundamentally wrong decision: the exchange of dark-squared bishops only benefits Black. The white position is probably still defensible, but Black's chances now suddenly increase.

43...♙xe3 44.♜xe3 ♜a8 45.♗g1 ♗f4 46.♜d2 ♗e6 47.♜ed3 ♗d4

Black will constantly have to reckon with an exchange sacrifice on d4, but for the moment this is not a danger to him. White now has

no active plan and is forced to await events, while Black is able to improve the placing of his pieces.

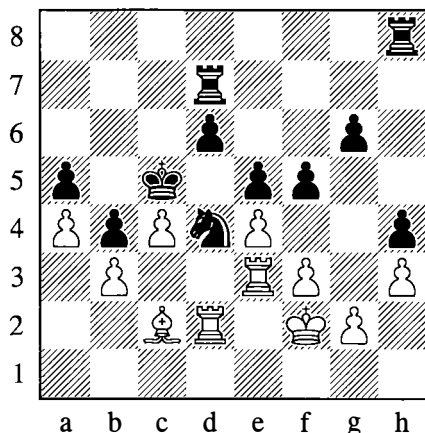
48.♔f1 ♖f8 49.♔f2 ♔c7 50.♔f1 ♔d7
51.♔f2 ♔e7 52.♔f1 ♖a6 53.♔f2 ♘e6
54.♙e3 ♘c5



55.♙d5 ♖aa8 56.♔f1 ♘e6 57.♙d2 ♘f4
58.♙e1 ♖a7 59.♙d1 ♙d7 60.♙e1

Of course not 60.c5 ♙fd8, when Black easily wins.

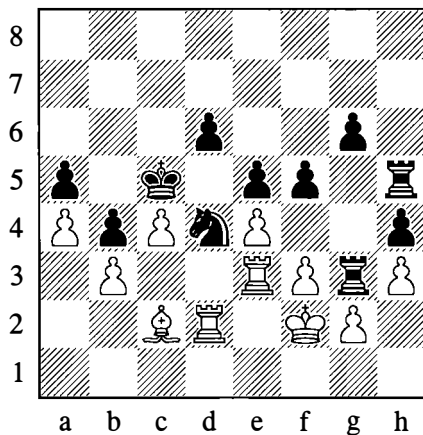
60...♙h8 61.♙d1 ♘e6 62.♙e1 ♘d4 63.♙d1
♔d8 64.♙e1 ♔c7 65.♙d1 ♔c6 66.♙e1 ♔c5
67.♙e3 f5 68.♔f2



68...♙h5!

Black finally sets about implementing his plan which is based on attacking the g2-pawn by transferring the rooks to g3 and g5 and the knight to f4. At first sight this seems a vain undertaking, since White can protect the pawn on g2 with four pieces. But the point is that the white pieces are also tied to the defence of the e4-pawn; in the event of an exchange on e4 White will have to recapture with a piece, as otherwise the opening of the f-file will bring about his downfall. Of course it would not suit him to exchange on f5, as this would strengthen the black pawns in the centre.

69.♔f1 ♖g5 70.♔f2 ♖g3 71.♔f1 ♖f7 72.♔f2
♖f8 73.♔f1 ♖h8 74.♔f2 ♙h5



75.♔f1?

The decisive mistake. By playing 75.♔g1 ♖hg5 76.♔h2, White could defend. The further course of the game reveals the difference, which is fatal to White, between the king positions on f1 and h2.

75...♖hg5 76.♖f2

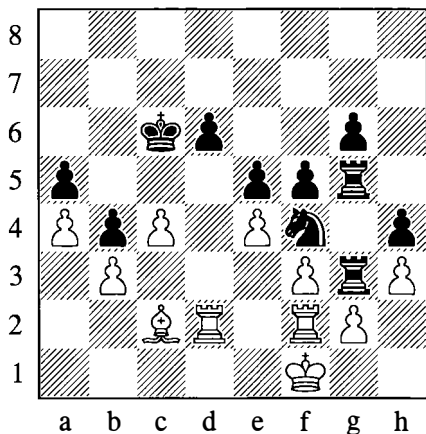
Another mistake, though in a position that is lost already. Instead 76.♙b1 appears more stubborn; the idea is to answer 76...♘e6 with 77.♙d3 ♘f4 78.♙d5+ ♘xd5 79.♙xd5+ ♔c6 80.♙d2, making Black's win more difficult.

I was intending to meet 76.♔b1 by transferring my king to c7 and only then playing ...♘e6-f4.

76...♗c6

The immediate 76...♘e6 was also possible.

**77.♞d2 ♗c7 78.♞f2 ♘e6 79.♞e2 ♘f4
80.♞d2 ♗c6!**



White is in zugzwang. Any move with his king or a rook, or with his bishop to b1, leads to loss of material. He must either make positional concessions with 81.exf5 or else allow an exchange on e4 after 81.♔d1. If White's king were on the h-file, he would be safe.

**81.exf5 gxf5 82.♔d1 ♞g7 83.♔c2 ♞g5
84.♔d3 ♗d7 85.♔c2**

With 85.c5 d5 86.♔b5† ♗c7 White would only be making Black's task easier.

85...♗e6 86.♔d3 ♞g3 87.♔c2 ♞g8 88.♔d3

Also in the event of 88.♔b1 Black would gradually penetrate the enemy camp with his pieces, after playing ...♞g8-d8, then ...d6-d5, and opening the f- and c-files. Now White loses even more quickly.

**88...e4 89.fxe4 ♘xd3 90.♞xf5 ♘c5 91.♞fd5
♞xb3 92.♞xd6† ♗e7 93.♞6d4 ♞c3 94.e5 b3**

95.♞xh4 ♞c1† 96.♗f2 b2

White resigned.

0-1

The 25th Championship of the USSR, which began at the start of 1958 in Riga, was at the same time (like the 22nd Championship) a Zonal Tournament. Petrosian kept strictly to his strategy for qualifying for the Interzonal, and didn't permit himself any "misfirings" such as had happened the year before. He confidently kept within the leading group, and took second place without suffering a single defeat. But it was Tal, storming ahead on his way, who was Champion of the country.

In his article on the Championship, Bronstein wrote of Petrosian's achievements and prospects with interest:

"Tigran Petrosian is among the most talented of Grandmasters, a prizewinner in two Interzonals and a participant in two World Championship Candidates Tournaments. Ever since his youthful years his play has borne the stamp of maturity and deep insight into the essence of a position. Winning against Petrosian is practically impossible; he was the only player in this Championship who didn't lose a single game, whereas everyone else lost at least two. Petrosian hasn't taken first place in any top-level tournaments, but on the other hand he has never come lower than third or fourth; he would consider fifth place to be a failure. This time he came closer than ever to first place, and it may be expected that Tigran Petrosian's shining achievement in the 25th national Championship will mark the start of a new phase in his creative development and his competitive results. If earlier he would sometimes deliberately restrain his own activity, curbing his exceptional combinative powers for the sake of maintaining a reserve of solidity in the position, he has now started playing in a noticeably more active manner, and the result has not been long coming."

The 1958 Interzonal Tournament at Portoroz was again a contest between Tal and Petrosian. After 14 rounds, with 6 wins to his credit, it was Petrosian in the lead, but after his loss to Larsen in round 16 he bowed to the inevitable and contented himself with an entrance pass to the Candidates Tournament.

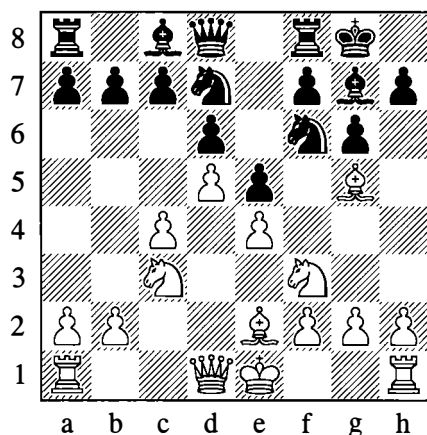
In the autumn of 1958 Petrosian took part in his first Olympiad, as second reserve for the Soviet team. It was a worthy debut; with 10½ points from 13 games, he shared 1st-2nd places in the table of scores for board 6.

GAME 40

Tigran Petrosian – Alexey Suetin

Riga 1958

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♗c3 ♙g7 4.e4 d6 5.♙e2 0-0 6.♗f3 e5 7.d5 ♗bd7 8.♙g5



In conjunction with the following retreat of the bishop, White's 8th move is a relatively new idea in this variation.

8...h6 9.♙h4 g5

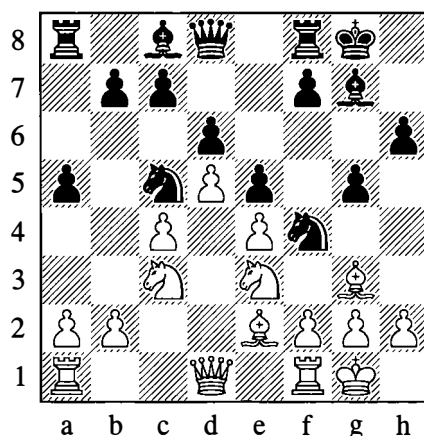
The natural reaction to White's 9.♙h4. True, Black must now come to terms with the weakening of his light squares on the kingside, which will have a role to play in due

course. Another possible plan consists of 9...a6 followed by ...♙e8, ...♗h7 and ...f7-f5.

10.♙g3 ♗h5 11.0-0 a5 12.♗e1 ♗f4 13.♗c2

The immediate 13.♙g4 may look quite good too, but White prefers to bring his knight to e3 first; he will establish a close watch on the f5 and g4 squares, and only then threaten the positional manoeuvre ♙g4.

13...♗c5 14.♗e3



14...♗xe4

A storm in a teacup! This continuation is prompted of course by White's threat to exchange bishops after ♙g4, but it brings Black no real benefits. Within a few moves the tension will abate, while White's positional plus will endure.

15.♗xe4 ♗xe4† 16.♙xe2 f5 17.f3 f4

There is no improvement in 17...fxe4 18.fxe4, when the exchange sacrifice 18...♗f4 (which White may incidentally decline) gives Black nothing; after 19.♙xf4 exf4 20.♗f5, White has a clear advantage.

18.c5

This move has to be played at once, before Black prevents it with b7-b6 which would considerably hamper White's queenside operations.

18...fxe3

White would answer 18...fxg3 with 19.hxg3! followed by 20.g4.

19.♖xe3 ♜f5 20.♝ac1 ♞d7 21.♞c3

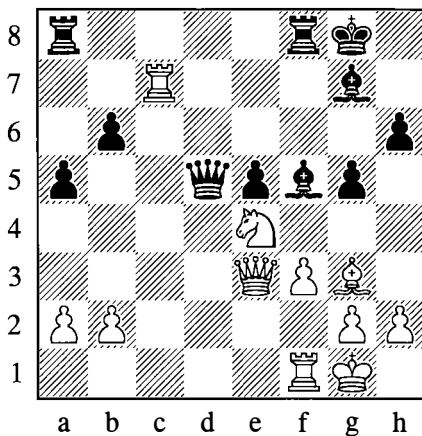
White prepares to double major pieces on the c-file or even triple them; he will then be threatening to exchange on d6 and invade along the open file.

21...dxc5

White's threat was to exchange on d6 at the appropriate moment and then penetrate with his queen to b6 and take control of the c-file. Black is practically forced to capture on c5 himself.

22.♞xc5 b6 23.♞e3 ♞xd5

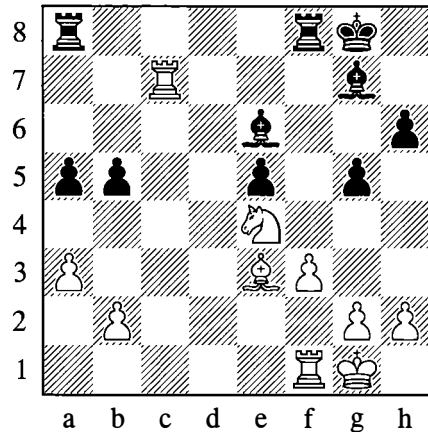
Better 23...♟f7. Defending the point c7 even if only temporarily, Black could then continue besieging the d5-pawn. Now the game finally opens up in White's favour.

24.♝xc7**24...♞d4**

It would be hard to decide on 24...♞xa2, as after 25.♞d6 some dangerous threats would arise for White. In many lines Black would have to fear an exchange sacrifice on g7 followed by a strike against e5.

25.♜f2

The start of a series of moves that consolidate White's advantage. It was essential for Black to go in for complications with 25...♞xb2. The transition to an ending condemns him to a difficult and unpromising defence.

25...♞xe3 26.♜xe3 ♜e6 27.a3 b5**28.♜d2!**

Tying the black rook to the a5-pawn. White's plan is simple: he strengthens his position by transferring his bishop to c3 and his rook to e1, after which he threatens the unpleasant manoeuvre ♞e4-g3-h5.

28...♝fd8 29.♜c3 a4 30.♝e1

Take note: if his h- and g-pawns were closer to their starting positions, Black could seek salvation by following the well-known recipe – surrendering a weak point for the sake of major simplification. In the present situation, however, there is a threat to bring the white knight to h5 (for instance), after which Black's king comes under attack.

30...♝ac8 31.♝b7!

Avoiding unnecessary simplification. The rook on the seventh rank is very actively placed, and Black is unable to exchange it off, seeing that 31...♝b8 loses a pawn to 32.♝xg7† ♞xg7 33.♜xe5†.

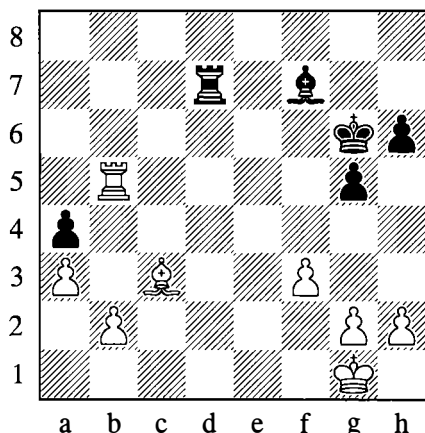
31...♞d5 32.♞b6 ♘f7

After this Black suffers material losses, but there was no longer any satisfactory defence. White would meet 32...♙d7 with 33.♞xh6!, and 32...♞e8 with 33.♙d6.

33.♙d6 ♞d8 34.♙f5

This move is probably more precise than 34.♙xb5. White wants to destroy the black king's cover. If the pawn on h6 falls, the one on g5 will also be condemned to perish. Black therefore defends the former, but now White acquires a material plus by other means.

34...♙h7 35.♞b7 ♞8d7 36.♞xd7 ♞xd7
37.♙xg7 ♙xg7 38.♞xe5 ♙g6 39.♞xb5



In spite of the opposite bishops, the endgame is won for White, albeit not without some technical difficulties.

39...♞d1† 40.♙f2 ♞c1

Black's last two moves are ineffective and make White's task easier. It would have been better to keep the rook inside its own camp.

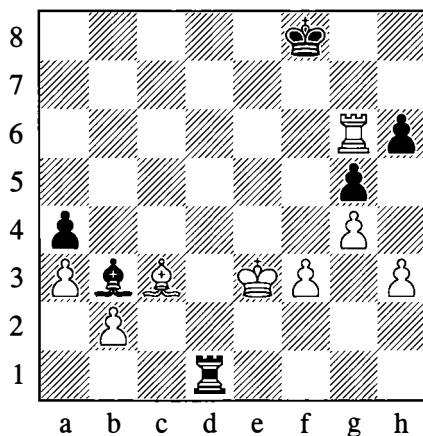
41.♞b6† ♙h7 42.g4

Fixing the pawns on the dark squares.

42...♞h1 43.h3 ♙d5

The pawn is taboo; 43...♞xh3 fails to 44.♙g2 ♞h4 45.♙e1.

44.♞d6 ♞d1 45.♞d7† ♙g8 46.♙e3 ♙b3
47.♞g7† ♙f8 48.♞g6



Further resistance is useless. Black makes a few more moves out of inertia.

48...c2 49.♞xh6 ♞d3† 50.♙e2 ♞d5 51.h4
gxh4 52.♞xh4 ♙f7 53.f4 ♙d1† 54.♙e3 ♙g6
55.g5 ♙h5 56.♙f6 ♞c5 57.♙d4 ♞b5 58.♙e4
♙d1 59.f5† ♙f7 60.♙e5 ♙c2† 61.♙f4

Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 41

Tigran Petrosian – Anatoly Bannik

Riga 1958

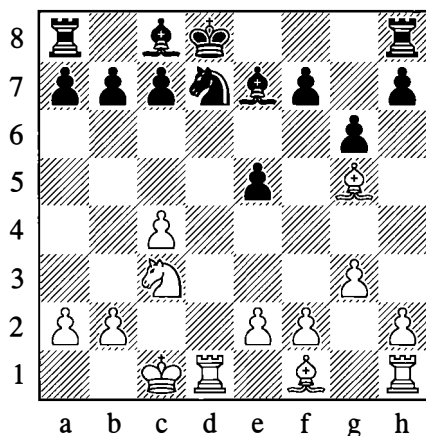
1.c4 e5 2.♙c3 ♙c6 3.♙f3 ♙f6 4.g3 d6 5.d4
g6 6.dxe5 ♙xe5

The system of development that Black has chosen cannot be called a success. White obtains the better ending by force. At this point it would be even worse to play 6...dxe5 7.♞xd8† ♙xd8 8.♙g5 ♙e7 9.0-0-0†. Black then has even greater difficulties than in the actual game, as his knight on c6 is badly placed.

7.♙xe5 dxe5 8.♞xd8† ♙xd8 9.♙g5 ♙e7

10.0-0-0† ♖d7

There is nothing better. White answers 10...♗d7 with 11.♗h3, and 10...♖e8 with 11.♘b5.

**11.h4!**

The strongest continuation. It looked tempting to play 11.♗xe7† ♖xe7 12.♘d5† ♖d8 13.♗h3, but after 13...f5 (parrying the threat of 14.♘f6) 14.e4 c6 15.♘e3 f4 16.♗xd7 ♗xd7 17.♘g4 ♖e8 18.♘f6 ♖e7, White's advantage starts to evaporate.

11...f6

Essential. The natural 11...c6 would be met by 12.♘e4 h6 13.♘d6 ♖h7 14.♗xe7† ♖xe7 15.♗h3 f5 16.e4, when Black is in a bad way.

12.♗e3 c6 13.h5 g5 14.♗h3 ♖c7 15.♘e4 ♘b6 16.♗xc8 ♖axc8 17.b3 ♖cd8

A slight improvement was 17...g4 18.♖h4 ♖hg8. White intended to answer 17...g4 with 18.h6 followed by 19.♖h5.

18.♗c5!

In deciding on this move, it was imperative to weigh all the “pros” and “cons” thoroughly. The move looks illogical, as White is voluntarily exchanging his “good” bishop for his opponent’s “bad” one, instead of swapping bishop for knight (18.♗xb6†) and securing his

preponderance. However, if you probe into the position a little more deeply, it becomes obvious that after a possible exchange of rooks on the d-file and the transfer of his king to e6, Black would cover his vulnerable points and create an impregnable formation. The role played in this by the “bad” bishop would be of no small importance.

18...♗xd1†

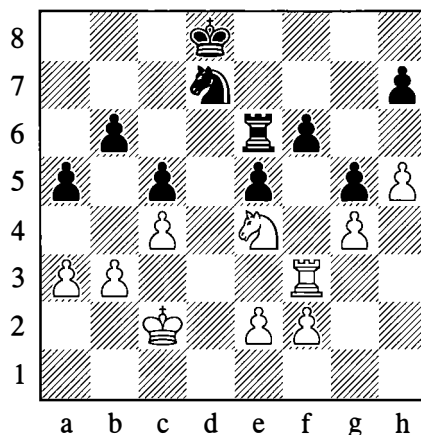
Probably 18...♗xc5 19.♘xc5 ♖he8 was better. Admittedly this continuation was not obvious. In choosing it, Black would be losing a pawn – 20.♗xd8 ♖xd8 21.♘xb7† ♖c7 22.♘c5 – but in return he could obtain quite good counterplay, as after 22...e4 the knight on c5 would be awkwardly placed (the threat, for instance, would be 23...a5 followed by 24...♖e5).

19.♗xd1 ♗xc5 20.♘xc5 ♖e8 21.♘e4 ♖e6

The rook is not well placed here. However, 21...♖f8 22.g4 would be no better either: 22...♖f7 23.♖d6, or 22...♘c8 23.♘c5 ♖f7 24.♘e6†.

22.g4 a5 23.♖d3 ♘d7 24.♖c2 b6

In suitable circumstances White might have played c4-c5.

25.♖f3 ♖d8 26.a3 c5

Relinquishing control of the important d5-square. However, White's threat of 27.b4 followed by c4-c5 was highly unpleasant.

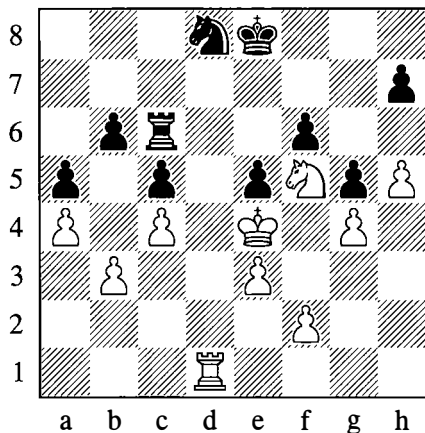
27.♗c3 ♖e7 28.♞d3 ♞c6 29.♞d5 ♜f8
30.♜g3 ♜e6 31.♜f5+ ♗e8 32.e3 ♜c7

In the present situation it would be better to bring the knight to f7; to that end 32...♜d8 should have been played.

33.♞d1 ♜e6 34.♜d3 ♞c7 35.♜e4 ♞c6
36.♜d6+ ♗e7 37.♜f5+ ♗e8 38.♜d6+ ♗e7
39.♜f5+ ♗e8

These last moves of White's were played to gain time on the clock.

40.a4 ♜d8



In this position the game was adjourned. If it were Black to move now, he would play ...♜f7, making it very hard for White to win. But:

41.♜h6

The sealed move. Now after 41...♞e6 42.♜f5 ♞c6 43.♜g8, or 41...♗e7 42.♜g8+ ♗e8 43.♜f5, White wins the pawn on f6. Black's position is also hopeless after 41...♜b7 42.♜g8 ♜f8 43.♞d7. His next move is therefore forced.

41...♜e6 42.♜g8 ♜f8

After 42...♜f7 White wins with 43.♞d7+! ♜xg8 44.♜d5.

At this point, interestingly, the obvious-seeming 43.♜f5 fails to 43...♜f7 44.♜h6+ ♜g7 45.♞d8 ♜c6 46.♞e8 ♜c7, when White unexpectedly loses his knight!

43.♞d2!

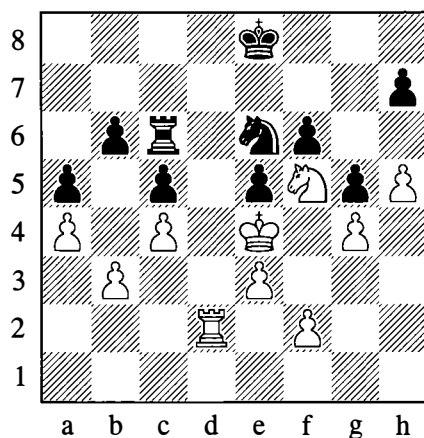
Placing Black in zugzwang. What is he to do now? On 43...♞e6, White plays 44.♜f5 ♜f7 45.♞d8 ♞c6 46.♜h6+ ♜g7 47.♜e4!, with 48.♜f5+ to follow (47...♜e6 doesn't save Black, on account of 48.♞d7+! ♜xh6 49.♜d5).

43...♜f7

In the event of 43...♜d7, White easily wins by 44.♜f5 ♜d8 45.e4 ♗e8 46.f3 ♜d8 47.♞xd7+! ♜xd7 48.♜xf6+.

44.♜h6+ ♗e8 45.♜f5 ♜e6

On 45...♜d7, the simplest way to win is 46.♜d5 ♜b8 47.♜h6 ♜f8 (47...♜e7 48.♜g8+ ♜f7 49.♜e4!) 48.♜e4! ♗e8 49.♜f5 ♜d7 50.♜g8, transposing to the previous note.



46.♞d6

Forcing the transition to a knight endgame which is easily won, since the white king's penetration to d5 or f5 is decisive.

46...♞xd6 47.♜xd6+ ♜d7 48.♜b5 ♜g7

After 48...♖f8 White wins by 49.♔f5 ♕e7 50.♖c3 ♖d7 51.♖d5† ♕f7 52.e4 h6 53.f3!, putting Black in zugzwang.

49.h6 ♖e8 50.♔d5

Zugzwang again! The rest needs no explanation.

50...f5 51.♔xe5 f×g4 52.♖c3 ♕e7 53.♖e4 ♕f7 54.♔f5 g3 55.f×g3 g4 56.♖g5† ♕g8 57.♔e6 ♖c7† 58.♔d7 ♖a6 59.e4 ♖b4 60.e5 ♖d3 61.e6

Black resigned.

1–0

GAME 42

Tigran Petrosian – Alexander Tolush

Riga 1958

1.c4 f5 2.♖f3 ♖f6 3.g3 e6 4.♖g2 ♕e7 5.d4 d5 6.♖bd2 0–0 7.0–0 b6

Against the deployment of forces that White has adopted (knights on f3 and d2), Black would have a difficult game if he went into the customary “Stonewall” with 7...c6, in view of the manoeuvre ♖f3–e1–d3 and ♖d2–f3.

8.b3 c5

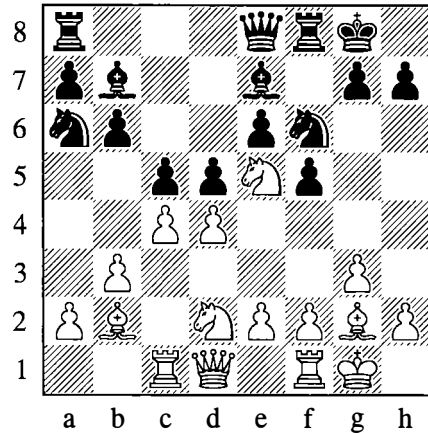
Black is playing for a position with hanging pawns after 9.cxd5 exd5 10.dxc5 bxc5. With all the pieces on the board, these pawns would be a strength rather than a weakness. It should be observed that in a fight against hanging pawns, a knight on d2 is badly placed. White therefore completes his development without releasing the tension between the pawns in the centre.

9.♖b2 ♖b7 10.♖c1 ♖a6?

Not a good move. As the game goes, the removal of this knight from the centre makes itself felt. If Black did want to develop his

knight on a6, it would have made sense to play a preliminary 10...a5.

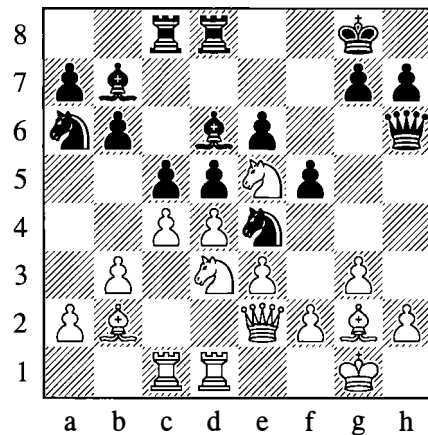
11.♖e5 ♖e8



12.e3 ♖d8 13.♖e2 ♖d6 14.♖df3 ♖e4 15.♖d3 ♖h5 16.♖fe1

This rook will soon be transferred to d1. But the move White makes is necessary to enable the knight on f3 to go to e5.

16...♖h6 17.♖fe5 ♖c8 18.♖ed1 ♖fd8



19.cxd5

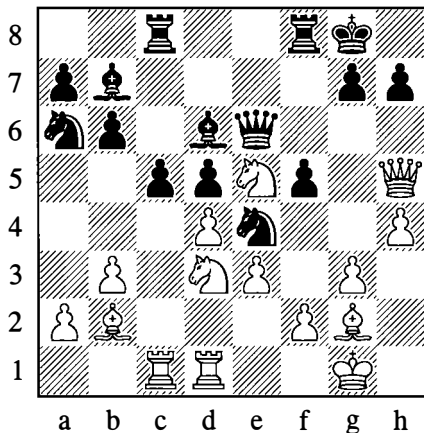
A critical decision; White will now need to be on his guard against tactical threats with ...c5–c4. But the exchange on d5 is essential to the plan he has in mind.

19...exd5 20.♖f3

Black begins to have difficulties with the defence of his f5-pawn. Playing ...g7-g6 would be risky in view of the possible opening of the a1-h8 diagonal. Probably 20...♞f8 at once was the best answer.

20...♞e6 21.h4 ♞f8?

The right move was 21...c4, which White intended to meet with 22.bxc4 ♙xe5 23.cxd5 ♙xd5 24.dxe5 ♘c3 25.♘f4.

22.♞h5**22...♞c7**

[Ed. note: Black allows a precarious pair of "hanging pawns" to be formed. It was worth considering 22...♞e7, with a view to meeting 23.dxc5 with 23...♘axc5, when White's minor pieces are in the air. In the game, after White's next move, 23...♘axc5 would fail to 24.♘f4.]

23.dxc5 bxc5 24.♘f4 ♞e7

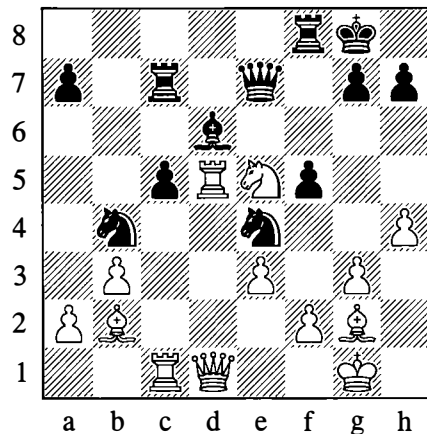
On 24...♞e8, White could play 25.♞xe8 ♞xe8 26.♘xd5 ♞xe5 27.♘xc7 ♙xc7 28.♙xe5 ♙xe5 29.♞d8+ ♔f7 30.♞d7+.

25.♘d5

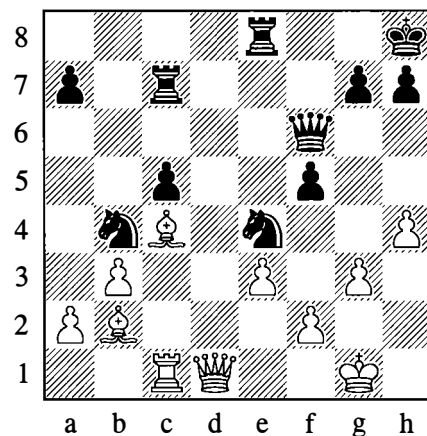
White gains nothing from 25.♘e6 hxg6 26.♘g6 ♞e6 27.♞h8+ ♔f7 28.♞xg7+ ♔e8.

25...♙xd5 26.♞xd5 ♘b4 27.♞d1

27.♙xe4 fxe4 28.♘c4 g6 29.♞d1 would give Black some tactical chances.

**27...♙xe5?**

This leads to a quick loss. In the event of 27...♘xd5 28.♞xd5+ ♔h8 Black would still be able to defend, although White would have a clear plus; after 29.♙xe4 fxe4 30.♞xe4 he would have two pawns and a good position for the exchange.

28.♞xe5 ♞f7 29.♙f1 ♔h8 30.♙c4 ♞f6 31.♞e8 ♞xe8**32.♙xf6 gxf6 33.♞h5 ♞ce7 34.a3 ♘a2 35.♞d1 ♞b8 36.♞xf5 ♘ac3 37.♞d7**

Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 43

Ludek Pachman – Tigran Petrosian

Portoroz 1958

Notes by V. Panov

1.c4 ♖f6 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 ♙g4

The choice of this rarely seen move was to turn out very well from the psychological viewpoint, as it immediately dislodged Pachman, the openings connoisseur, from the usual theoretical paths.

4.♘c3 g6 5.e4

After this it is easier for Black to exploit the weakening of the central point d4, and his third move is fully vindicated. A more natural continuation was 5.e3 followed by h2-h3, forcing the exchange of the black bishop in more favourable circumstances.

5...♙xf3 6.♗xf3 ♘fd7

After 6...♘bd7 7.♙e3 e5 8.0-0-0, or 6...♘c6 7.d5 ♘d4 8.♗d1 e5 9.dxe6 ♘xe6 10.♙e2, White's position would be preferable.

7.e5

With this move which is clearly not in the spirit of the position, White sows the wind and reaps the whirlwind. Pachman can scarcely have been hoping that his opponent would blunder with 7...dxe5 8.♗xb7, but he evidently missed the Soviet Grandmaster's fine reply on move nine. Black now obtains an advantage in development and quickly seizes the initiative. White should have played 7.♙e3, 8.0-0-0, and where appropriate h2-h4.

7...♘c6 8.exd6

The bold pawn sacrifice 8.e6 would still leave Black with the better chances after 8...fxe6

9.♙e3 e5! 10.d5 ♘d4 11.♙xd4 exd4 12.♘e4 ♘e5 13.♗f4 (or 13.♗d1) 13...c5!.

8...♘d4 9.♗e4 e5!

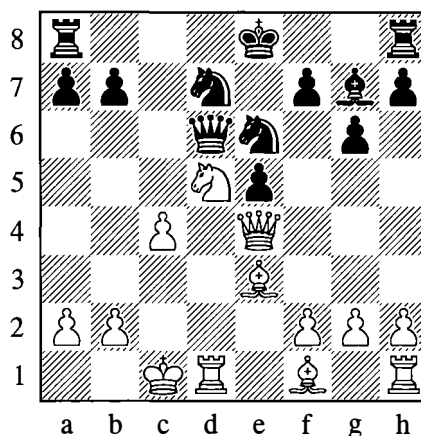
Together with his better development, Black's strong knight supported by his centre pawn guarantees him active counterplay.

10.dxc7 ♗xc7 11.♘d5 ♗d6 12.♙f4

Also after 12.♙e3 ♘c5 13.♗b1 ♙g7, White would find it hard to complete his development by castling short.

If 12.♙d3, then 12...♘c5 13.♗e3 ♙h6 14.♗xh6 ♘xd3† 15.♙f1 0-0-0 with a powerful attack for Black.

12...♘e6! 13.♙e3 ♙g7 14.0-0-0



14...0-0!

A bold decision. When making the castling move, Black had to perform an accurate calculation of the perplexing complications that ensue. If he had wanted, Petrosian could have avoided them by playing 14...♘dc5 and 15...♘d4.

15.♘b6?

In pursuit of a slight material plus, White underrates his opponent's positional compensation and the dangers of his own situation – with his backward development

playing a fateful role. He should have played 15.g4!, bringing about a sharp position with chances for both sides.

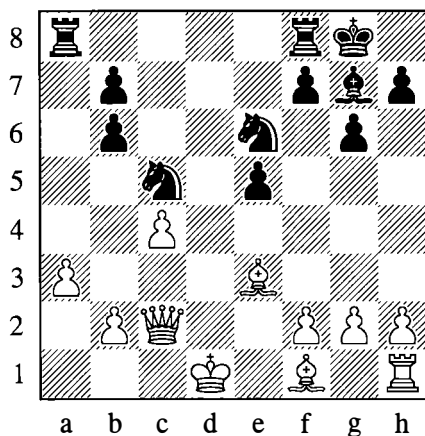
15...♟xd1† 16.♞xd1 axb6!

This astute move may have been what Pachman overlooked. After 16...♞xb6 17.♞c2 White would have chances of a successful defence.

17.a3

On 17.♟xb7, Black would simply play 17...♟xa2. But an improvement was 17.♟b1, since the queen will have to retreat in any case with the loss of an important tempo. Now Black's attack grows with every move.

17...♞dc5 18.♟c2



18...e4! 19.f3

White has lost his way, and fails to offer fitting resistance. A better move was 19.♞e2, endeavouring to bring the rook into the battle as quickly as possible.

19...♟ad8† 20.♞e1

If 20.♞c1, then 20...♞d4 is good.

20...♞d4

Black's natural wish is to preserve his powerful bishop, but otherwise he would have

chosen the energetic 20...♞d4. For example: 21.♞f2 ♞xe3† 22.♞xe3 ♞d4 23.♟c1 ♞f5† 24.♞f2 e3†, or 21.♞h6 ♞d3† 22.♞xd3 exd3 23.♟d2 ♟fe8 24.♞d1 ♞c5.

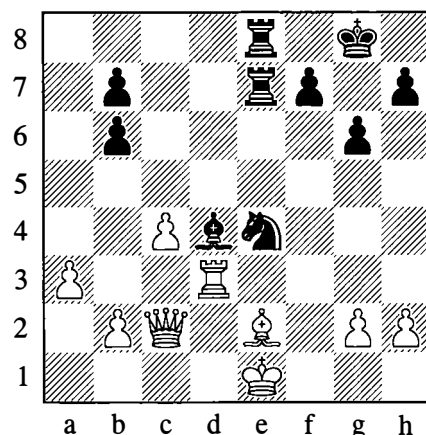
21.♞d4 ♞xd4 22.fxe4 ♞xe4 23.♞e2 ♟fe8 24.♟f1 ♟e7!

The white king is unable to find cover, and Black can therefore regroup his forces methodically to strike the concluding blow.

25.♟f3 ♟de8 26.♟d3

Not 26.♞f1 which loses to 26...♞g5.

Now the beautiful culminating attack commences.



26...♞g1! 27.h3

The pawn sacrifice 27.♞f1 ♞xh2 28.♞d1 would not save White, owing to 28...♞g3† 29.♞f2 ♟e1 30.♞f3 ♟f1†.

27...♞h2 28.♞f3 ♞g3† 29.♞d1 ♞f2† 30.♞d2 ♞f4† 31.♞c3 ♞xd3 32.♞xd3 ♟e3† 33.♞d4 ♞h6 34.c5 b5 35.♞xb7

He could have dragged out his resistance by 35.c6 bxc6 36.♞xc6 ♟e2! 37.♟b3 ♞g7† 38.♞c5 ♟c8 39.♟xb5 ♟c2†!

35...♞g7† 36.♞d5 ♟e6

White resigned.

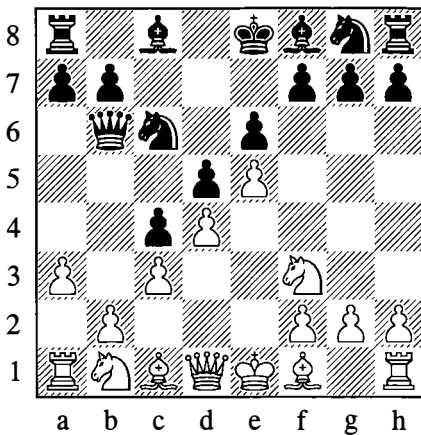
GAME 44

Peter Clarke – Tigran Petrosian

Munich (ol) 1958

Notes by B. Gulko

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♖b6 5.♟f3 ♜c6
6.a3 c4



In view of the positional threat of 7.b4, this is one of the two acceptable continuations; the other is 6...a5. A peculiarity of the position that has now arisen is that White is obliged to castle short, on the side where he has more space, and Black has to castle long. This means that the most natural plans of attack – on the kingside for White, on the queenside for Black – will involve risk.

7.g3

A good method of development; compared with this, 7.♜bd2 has only one advantage – that of setting the trap 7...♜ge7? 8.♙xc4.

7...♙d7 8.♙g2

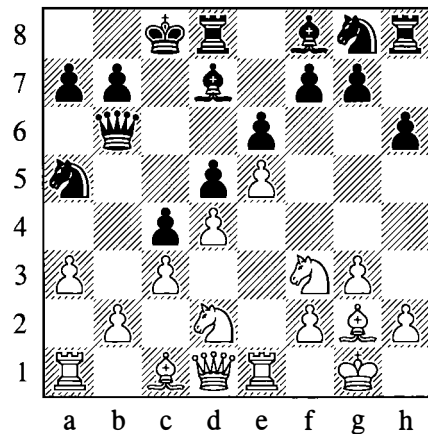
Here 8.h4 followed by 9.♙h3 gives more in the way of initiative.

8...0-0 9.0-0 ♜a5 10.♜bd2 h6!

Preventing ♜g5, which would have been possible after 10...♙b8.

11.♞e1

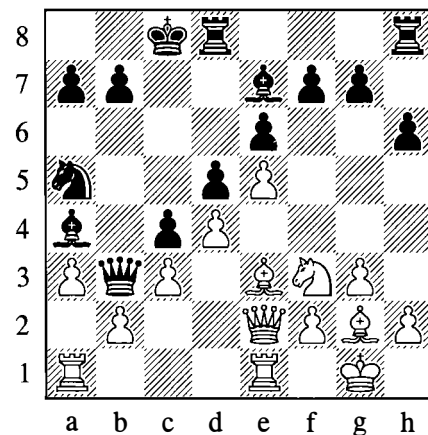
He should have tried to put pressure on the black kingside after 11.h4 and 12.h5. As a result of White's passive play, the initiative gradually passes to Black.



**11...♜e7 12.♜f1 ♜f5 13.♜e3 ♜xe3 14.♞xe3
♙e7 15.♞e1 ♖b3! 16.♖e2**

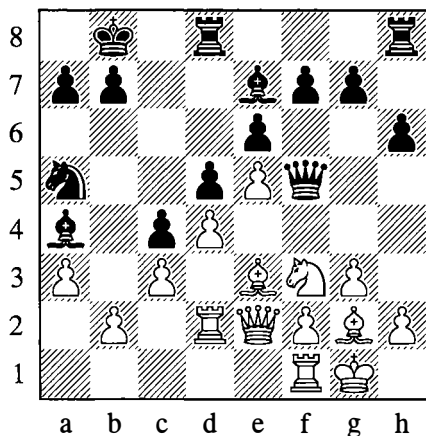
In the event of 16.♖xb3 ♜xb3, Black conducts a queenside offensive with ...b7-b5, ...a7-a5 and ...b5-b4 unhindered.

16...♙a4 17.♙e3



17...♔b8

A more precise move was 17...♖c2, for now White could have played 18.♖ac1 to prevent Black's following manoeuvre.

18.♖ad1 ♖c2! 19.♖d2 ♖f5 20.♖f1**20...g5!**

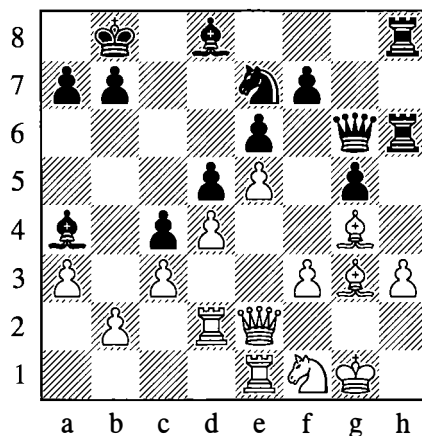
The black army with the queen at its head proceeds to the attack. White must now think only of defence.

21.h3 h5 22.♖h2 ♖dg8 23.g4?

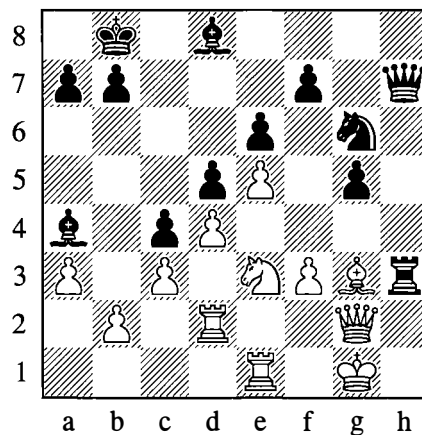
White opens up a breach in his own fortress wall. He would have had a solid position after 23.f3 followed by ♖f2 and ♖e2, keeping control of the c2-square.

23...♖g6 24.♖f3 hxf4 25.♖xf4 ♖c6 26.f3 ♖d8 27.♖f2?

White's chief weakness is the h3-pawn, which he should have defended by 27.♔g2 ♖e7 28.♖h1, and if 28...♖f5 then 29.♖f2.

27...♖e7 28.♖e1 ♖h6 29.♖f1? ♖gh8 30.♖g3**30...♖xh3!**

After the opening of the h-file, Black breaks through to the enemy king.

31.♖xh3 ♖xh3 32.♖g2 ♖h7 33.♖e3 ♖g6
Threatening 34...g4 and 35...♖g5.**34.♖g4?**

Now Black forces the exchange of White's important dark-squared bishop, after which the dark squares are left defenceless; 34.♖f1 was more tenacious.

34...♖f4 35.♖xf4 gxf4 36.♖f1 ♖g3 37.♖f2 ♖h3† 38.♖e2 ♖g2 39.♖g1 ♖xf2† 40.♖xf2 ♖h7 41.♖h1 ♖g6

White resigned.

GAME 45

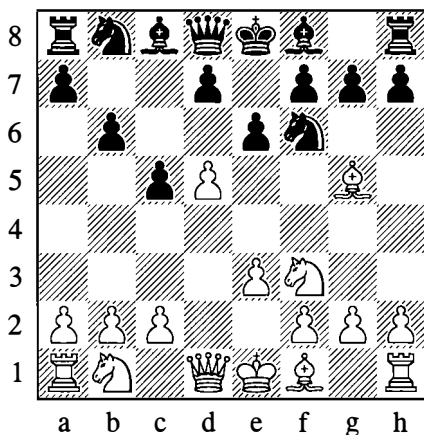
Tigran Petrosian – Julius Kozma

Munich (ol) 1958

1.d4 ♖f6 2.♟f3 e6 3.♙g5 c5 4.e3 b6?

This continuation has been seen repeatedly in practice. As the present game shows, it is inadequate to secure an equal game.

5.d5!



Crossing the demarcation line between the camps, this pawn threatens to advance further and thoroughly cramp the black position – so Black needs to take some urgent measures. By forcing the exchange of White's bishop with 5...h6, he would hardly do much to improve matters. After 6.♙xf6 ♜xf6 7.♟c3, White would have excellent prospects for developing an initiative.

The Czechoslovakian master tries to solve the problems by natural moves.

5...exd5 6.♟c3 ♙b7 7.♟xd5 ♙xd5 8.♙xf6 ♜xf6 9.♜xd5 ♟c6

After quite a long think about his fifth move, Kozma played the next few quickly. He was probably intending to take the pawn on b2, but on the very brink of the precipice he held

back from the temptation: 9...♜xb2 10.♙d1 ♜b4† 11.c3! ♜xc3† 12.♙d2 ♜c1† 13.♟e2, and White emerges a rook up.

Black's weaknesses on the d-file are of fundamental importance in the coming struggle.

10.♙c4 ♙e7 11.0-0-0

An imprecise move. It would be easier for White to increase his advantage with his king on g1.

11...♙d8 12.♙d2 0-0 13.c3

Of course White would like to play 13.♙hd1, but he needs to deal with the possibility of ...b6-b5.

13...♟a5 14.♙e2 ♜e6 15.♙hd1 ♜xd5 16.♙xd5 d6

At first it seemed to me that I could win the d-pawn by means of 17.♟g5, since 17...f5 would fail to 18.♟e6; but then I saw 17...♙xg5 18.♙xg5 f5, cutting the white rook off from the centre.

17.♟d2 f5 18.f4 g6 19.g3 ♙f6

Black is making the only possible moves to defend. Bringing his rook to e6, he gives his d-pawn one more guard. In addition, White has to reckon with the possible activity of this rook along the e-file.

20.e4 fxe4 21.♟xe4 ♙e6 22.♙f3 ♟g7

It was worth considering 22...♟c4, attempting to activate the knight. Then on 23.♙d3 Black could play 23...d5 24.♙xd5 ♙xd5 25.♙xd5 ♟d6, reaching a position where White's extra pawn would not be easy to exploit.

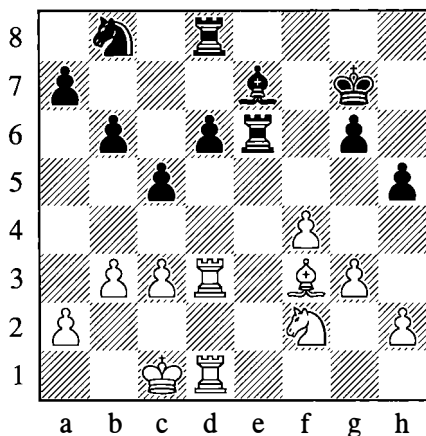
Subsequently Black will still have the chance to set his opponent a difficult task by sacrificing a pawn. Kozma fails to take resolute measures, but if Black passively awaits events, his cause is hopeless.

23.b3 ♖c6 24.♞5d3

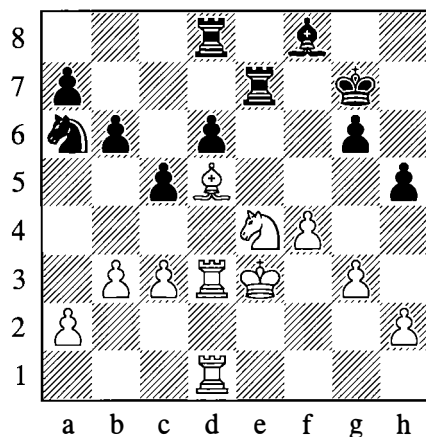
White aims to establish his bishop on d5.

24...♜b8 25.♜f2 h5

Defending against the threat of 26.♙g4 followed by 27.♜e4. But 25...♙f8 was better, intending in some lines to bring the queen's rook to e8. On 26.♙d5 ♞e2 27.♞3d2 ♞de8 or 27.♞1d2 ♞e1†, Black would retain good defensive chances.

**26.♜d2!**

A difficult move. The king heads for f3, so that on d5 the bishop will be freed from the duty of protecting the knight on e4.

26...♙f8 27.♙d5 ♞e7 28.♜e4 ♜a6 29.♞e3**29...♜c7?**

Black doesn't make use of the tactical opportunity that has presented itself – 29...c4. Then from White's viewpoint there would be no sense in going in for 30.♙xc4 ♜c5 31.♞d4 d5 32.♙xd5 ♞xd5 33.♞xd5 ♞xe4†; but after 30.bxc4 ♜c5 31.♞d4 Black would exchange off the knights, bringing about a position where White has an extra pawn but the presence of opposite bishops gives Black saving chances.

30.♞f3 ♜xd5?

After this, the curtain can practically be drawn. A textbook position with bad bishop against good knight now arises.

31.♞xd5 ♞de8 32.♞e1 ♞e6 33.♞e2 b5 34.h3 a5 35.g4 hxg4† 36.hxg4 ♙e7 37.f5 ♞e5

A slight improvement was 37...♞f8. Black loses with 37...gxf3 38.gxf3 ♞h6, in view of the obvious 39.♜xd6.

38.♞xe5 dxe5 39.♞d2 ♞f8

Black could have set a small trap with 39...♞h8. It looks as if White can then win a piece by 40.f6† ♙xf6 41.♞d7†, but Black moves his king to h6, and then on 42.♜xf6 he has 42...♞f8, regaining the material. However, with 40.♞d7 White's win is easy.

40.♞d7 ♞f7 41.♞xe7

Black resigned.

1–0

Chapter 6

1959-1960

In January 1959 the capital of Georgia hosted the final of the 26th USSR Championship. It was distinguished by an exceptionally strong field of contestants. This was the result of the special conditions that had emerged in the Soviet chess organization. The point is that after many years of Botvinnik's hegemony, a period had begun in which – in the World Champion's own opinion – you could not name any one player who incontestably surpassed the rest. A further point is that the star of Mikhail Tal was already shining brightly in the chess firmament. The winner of the two preceding Soviet Championships and the Interzonal Tournament in Portoroz had given brilliant displays of attacking chess. Would Tal succeed in winning gold in the Championship of the Soviet Union for the third time running? The tournament in Tbilisi was to answer this question, which indeed became a leading theme of the exciting struggle.

Petrosian coped splendidly with the task that faced him. Once again he went through a tournament without a single loss, and this time he scored eight wins! In his new status as Champion of the USSR, looking back on the past year's work and the flood of emotions in his "little homeland", Petrosian gave a brief interview to a correspondent of the *Moscow Chess* magazine.

"It's a pleasant thing to be successful in my native city at the same time as upholding the sporting honour of Moscow. I spent my childhood in Tbilisi; my early chess years were passed here. The Muscovites as well as the Tbilisi fans were on my side. This gave me an edge over the other contestants.

"Over the past year I've done a lot of work on my chess style, I've been reconsidering my approach to the game. In the 26th Championship I tried to play more aggressively than in previous ones."

* * *

An assessment of his play published by the World Champion was encouraging and pleasant for Petrosian. In an article "On a Chessplayer's Style", published in the magazine *Ogonyok* ("The Firebrand") right after the Tbilisi tournament, Botvinnik wrote:

"Tigran Petrosian's style to some extent recalls that of Capablanca, Flohr and perhaps Smyslov. How is this to be explained, what do the styles of these players have in common? Chessplayers of this type make use of their chief strength which is their superiority in the understanding of the position. They accordingly strive to obtain positions where the time factor and the tactical element are not of crucial importance, where they can construct plans that are based on a solid foundation and lead to victory by stages of iron logic. With players in the Alekhine and Tal mould, on the

other hand, ‘everything’ resides in dynamics; the time factor and combinative vision are of decisive significance. I put ‘everything’ in inverted commas deliberately, since players of this second type cannot be successful without possessing good positional flair and technique, just as those of the first type cannot do without being astute and strong tacticians.

“Naturally if Petrosian were solely a specialist in the department of the positional struggle without being a resourceful tactician at the same time, he would not have been able to gain such a convincing victory in Tbilisi!”

GAME 46

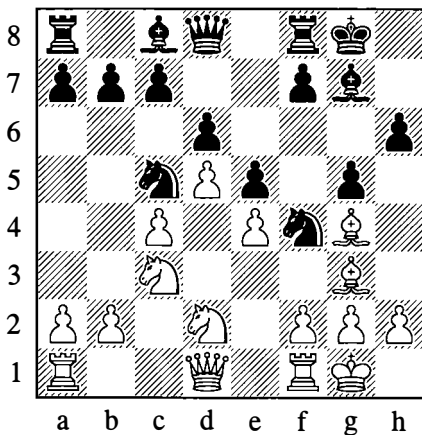
Tigran Petrosian – Jacob Yukhtman

Tbilisi 1959

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♔c3 ♙g7 4.e4 d6 5.♙e2 0–0 6.♘f3 e5 7.d5 ♘a6

The knight can go to c5 not only from d7 but also from a6. This way it doesn't obstruct the c8–h3 diagonal for the queen's bishop.

8.♙g5 h6 9.♙h4 g5 10.♙g3 ♘h5 11.♘d2 ♘f4 12.0–0 ♘c5 13.♙g4



13...a5?!

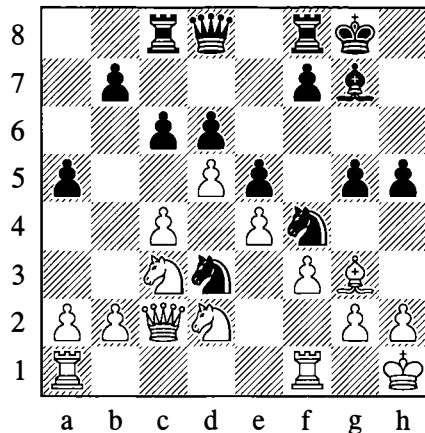
This move shows that Black is pinning all his hopes on the strong position of the knight on f4. Indeed the knight's position on that square appears unshakeable. If White exchanges on f4 with his bishop, it means granting a splendid diagonal to Black's bishop on g7 after the e5-pawn recaptures. Some time later it was found that instead of 13...a5 Black can play 13...♙xg4 14.♙xg4 h5! 15.♙f5 h4 16.♙xf4 exf4 17.♘f3 ♙f6! (the only way – not 17...f6?!, and not 17...♙f6 18.g3 with advantage to White) with possibilities of defence.

14.f3!

We can now trace the outline of White's subsequent actions. The bishop on g3 will move away, handing the square to the g-pawn. The knight on f4 will not be able to maintain itself, and without it Black cannot count on activity. For White, the plan is simple: he must try to bring a knight to e3, from where f5 is just one step away.

Examining the rest of this game, you will not see a white knight on f5. Don't be astonished. In practical chess, unrealized plans sometimes play a greater role than those that are enacted before your eyes.

14...♘cd3? 15.♙c2 c6 16.♔h1 h5 17.♙xc8 ♙xc8



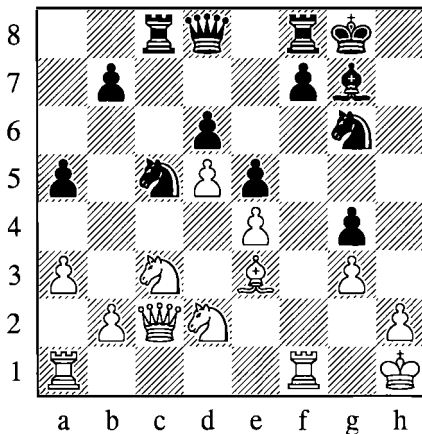
18.a3!

An unobtrusive but important move. White wants to exchange bishop for knight without letting Black recapture with his e-pawn. Right now, of course, 18.♟xf4 would be answered by the intermediate move 18...♞b4. Then after 19.♞b3 exf4 White wouldn't even have the modest satisfaction of snatching the b7-pawn, since 20.a3 ♞a6 21.♞xb7 would allow his queen to be trapped by 21...♞c5 22.♞a7 ♞a8.

18...cxd5 19.cxd5 ♞c5 20.♟f2 g4 21.g3 ♞g6

White would meet 21...♞fd3 with 22.♟xc5!. Incidentally the simple 22.♟e3 is also good.

22.fxg4 hxg4 23.♟e3



Black's position is lost, and few players in such a situation would be willing to wait around for some stroke of luck.

23...b5 24.♞xb5 ♞b6 25.a4!

White has an extra pawn as well as an overwhelming position. This means the curtain will soon come down.

25...♞a6 26.♞c4 f5 27.♞xf5 ♞xf5 28.exf5 ♞b7 29.♞g2 ♞b3 30.♞cxd6 ♞d7 31.♞f1

Black resigned. The reader should guard against any impression that the system

employed by White wins virtually by force. But for a long time no satisfactory antidote to it could be found.

1-0

GAME 47

Tigran Petrosian – Anatoly Lutikov

Tbilisi 1959

1.♞f3 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.♞c3 ♟g7 4.e4 0-0 5.d4 d6 6.♟e2 e5 7.d5 ♞a6 8.♟g5 h6 9.♟h4 c5 10.♞d2 ♟d7

An inaccuracy; 10...♞c7 at once is better.

11.♞b5 ♟e8

The defects of 10...♟d7 make themselves felt already. The bishop has to withdraw to e8 because the straightforward 11...♟xb5 doesn't stand up to criticism from the positional viewpoint; after 12.cxb5 White acquires the crucial strategic square c4 for the use of his knight "in perpetuity". On the other hand after 11...♞e7 it would be hard for Black to rid himself of the pin on the h4-d8 diagonal and prepare the ...f7-f5 advance.

12.a3 ♞d7

Black makes this "awkward" move to escape from the pin. A better move appears to be 12...♞c7, after which White should continue with 13.♞c3 (there is no point in exchanging knights, as the black queen would land on the "natural" square c7), and if 13...a6 then 14.b4!.

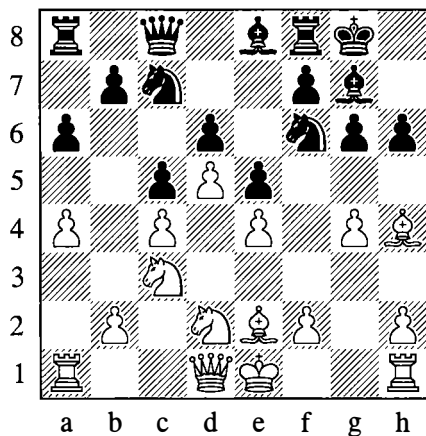
13.g4 ♞c7

But this time 13...♞h7 deserved preference, with the positional threat of ...♟g7-f6-g5. In reply, White intended 14.♟g3.

14.♞c3 a6 15.a4 ♞c8

Black could of course shut down the queenside with 15...a5, but White would still

have the possibility of taking the initiative on the kingside, while Black would be deprived of counterplay and effectively condemned to passive defence.



16.h3!

This modest-looking move is a difficult one to find, and deserves its exclamation mark. White intends to transfer his queen's knight to e3. But to carry out this manoeuvre he needs to free the square d1, and that in turn requires protection to be given to the g4-pawn. Moreover if Black subsequently plays ...f7-f5, then after exchanges on f5 White will have the move ♖g4 at his disposal. A strong alternative to 16.h3 was 16.g5, striving for a direct attack on the enemy king's position.

16...♜b8 17.♞c2 ♙d7 18.b3 b6 19.♘d1

White consistently pursues his plan without being afraid of Black's ...b6-b5.

19...b5 20.a5

A familiar device. White confines the black queen's knight, which has no suitable squares.

20...♚h8

A critical moment. Black could have played 20...bxc4 21.bxc4 ♜b4, which doesn't look bad on the face of it. But the white knight would

then alter its route: by playing 22.♘b2 and 23.♘d3 White could take the initiative on the queenside. With the knight on d3, another possibility would be opened up for him: preparation, after ♙g3, for f2-f4.

21.♙g3 ♘g8 22.♘e3 ♘e7

At this point it would have made more sense to go in for 22...bxc4 23.bxc4 ♜b4, although even then, after 24.♞c3 and 25.♘c2, the rook on b4 would be driven back.

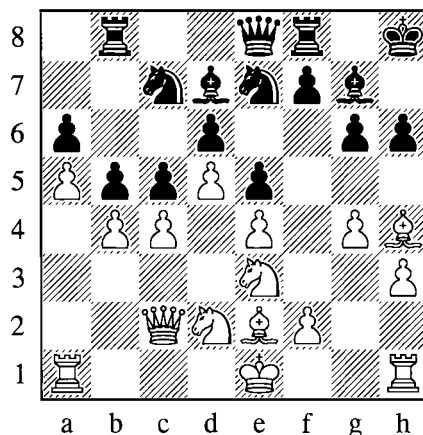
23.♙h4

An immediate 23.b4 looked tempting. However, this would be met by 23...f5! 24.bxc5 f4! 25.cxd6 fxe3 26.fxe3 (if 26.dxe7, then 26...exd2† 27.♞xd2 ♜f7, and White's seemingly formidable position is not as good as all that) 26...♘cd5 27.exd5 ♘xd5, with unclear and complex play.

23...♞e8

Black evidently supposes that "all is quiet" on the battle front. Otherwise he would have returned his knight to g8. White then planned to continue with 24.0-0, and if 24...♙f6 then 25.♙xf6 ♘xf6 26.f4! (26.b4! is also good) 26...♞e8 27.f5 g5 28.b4!.

24.b4!



What is Black to do now? On 24...cxb4, play continues: 25.c5! ♖c8 (other moves are even worse, for instance 25...dxc5 26.♗xc5, or 25...♘c8 26.c6) 26.c6! (Better than 26.♙xe7 ♗xe7 27.c6 ♙e8, when breaching Black's position is not so easy for the moment. Similarly after 26.cxd6 ♘cxd5 27.dxe7 ♖xc2 28.exf8=♗† ♗xf8 29.♘xc2 ♘f4 – or even, in this line, 27...♘xe3 28.exf8=♗† ♗xf8 29.♗xc8 ♗xc8 30.fxe3 – the outcome of the struggle is still far from clear, as White has difficulty co-ordinating the actions of his pieces.) 26...♘xc6 27.dxc6 ♙xc6, and in the resulting position the three pawns are insufficient compensation for a piece.

Black therefore endeavours to cover the Achilles' heel of his position – the point d6.

24...♘c8 25.bxc5 dxc5 26.cxb5 ♘xb5

White would answer 26...♙xb5 simply with 27.♗xc5.

27.♙xb5 ♖xb5

Black would retain more practical chances of successful defence after 27...♙xb5.

28.0-0 f5 29.f3 ♖f7

It was essential to play 29...h5, trying to create some counterplay on the kingside at any cost.

30.♘dc4 ♖b4

After this move Black's position is hopeless, as White carries out the indispensable regrouping of his pieces with gain of tempo.

31.♙e1 ♖b7 32.♙c3 h5

This is now merely a desperate gesture.

33.gxf5 gxf5 34.exf5 e4

A last attempt to confuse the issue.

35.♙h2

Another possibility of course was 35.fxe4 ♙xc3 36.♗xc3† ♖g7† 37.♙h2 ♗xe4 38.f6, and White wins. But by this time "all roads lead to Rome."

35...exf3 36.♖xf3 ♙d4 37.♗d3 ♙f6 38.♖g1 ♙h7 39.♙f6 ♖xf6 40.♗c3 ♗f8 41.♖g6 ♖f7

Here the game was adjourned.

42.♖g5

Black resigned without resuming. On 42...♗h6, the continuation would be 43.♖g6 ♗f8 44.♘e5 with an easy win.

1-0

GAME 48

Tigran Petrosian – Nikolai Krogus

Tbilisi 1959

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.c4 ♙g7 4.♘c3 d5 5.♙g5

Nikolai Krogus is a good connoisseur of theory. When playing him it is therefore psychologically correct to choose variations that have been less investigated. The move in the game, though not new, is employed comparatively rarely. That is why White selected it.

5...♘e4 6.cxd5

White can also keep a slight edge with 6.♙f4.

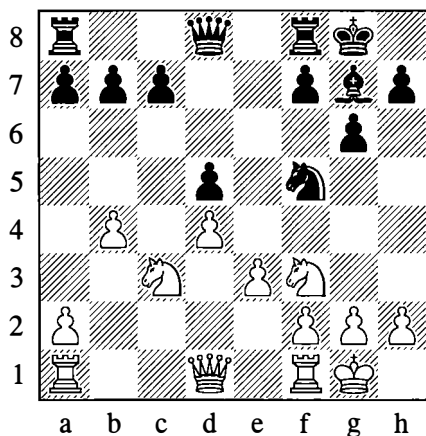
6...♘xg5

A more complicated game results from 6...♘xc3 7.bxc3 ♗xd5 8.e3. In that case the harmonious development of White's pieces and his pawn trio in the centre ensure him good prospects – as was demonstrated in Petrosian – Filip, Bucharest 1953.

7.♘g5 e6 8.♘f3 exd5 9.e3 0-0 10.♙d3 ♘c6 11.0-0 ♘e7 12.b4 ♙f5?

Black's manoeuvre with ...♖c6-e7 is not bad in itself, but it turns out that he is associating it with the faulty idea of exchanging the light-squared bishops – after which White acquires a large positional plus by simple means. Black should have played 12...♙g4.

13.♙f5 ♖xf5



14.b5

It becomes clear that after 14.b5 and 15.♞b3 Black cannot do without playing ...c7-c6 sooner or later. But the “Carlsbad” pawn on c6 will then be a weakness in his camp, and he will constantly have to worry about it. The fact that his bishop on g7 is practically shut out of the game for a long time also plays a very important role.

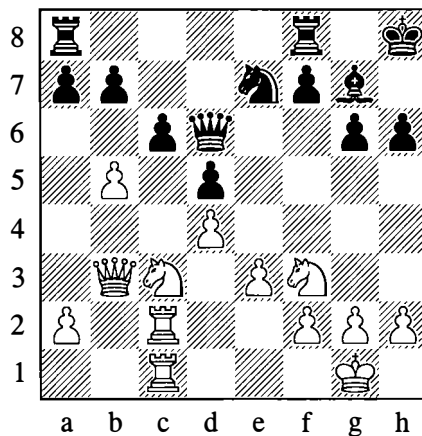
14...♞d6 15.♞b3 ♖e7 16.♞fc1 ♔h8?

The point of this move is hard to understand.

17.♞c2 h6

It emerges that after Black's unnecessary king move to h8 he is virtually compelled to play 17...h6, as otherwise, after transferring his rook from f8 to the queenside (as he must), he would have to reckon with the unpleasant threat of e3-e4 and a subsequent ♖g5.

18.♞ac1 c6



19.♖a4

White didn't want to exchange pawns at once, as after 19.bxc6 bxc6 20.♖a4 (or 20.♖e2) 20...♞b8 Black would obtain some counter-chances. White therefore strives to improve his position to the maximum, making a series of useful moves to this end. Should Black exchange pawns himself on b5, a chronic weakness on d5 will be the result.

19...♞ab8 20.g3

White has no reason to hurry. A loophole for his king will be essential in any case.

20...♔h7 21.♖c5 ♞fd8

White now wins a pawn by force. However, Black would also have a very difficult position after 21...b6 22.♖d3 cxb5 23.♞xb5 ♞fc8 24.♞xc8 ♞xc8 25.♞xc8 ♖xc8 26.♖f4 ♖e7 27.♞e8.

22.bxc6 bxc6 23.♞a4 ♞f6 24.♔g2

Of course 24.♖e5 was also playable, picking up one of the pawns at once.

24...♞a8

It's a sorry state of affairs when you have to make moves like this, but there is no other way to defend the a-pawn.

25.♖b7 ♞e8 26.♖a5 g5

Finally recognizing that the c6-pawn is doomed, Black tries to work up at least *some* play on the kingside.

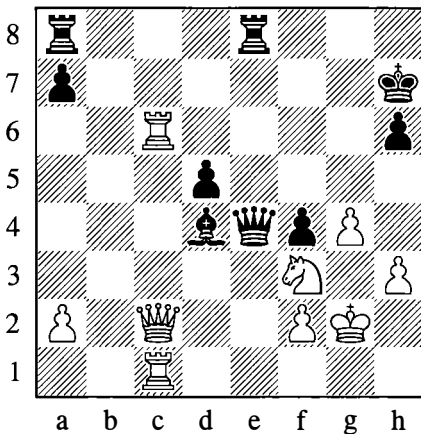
27.h3

There was no particular need for this move, but White wants to win in complete comfort.

27...♖f5 28.♜xc6 ♖e4 29.♝c5 f5 30.♖c2
♜xc6 31.♝xc6 f4

Black desperately exerts himself to create at least a semblance of counterplay, but White's pieces are superbly placed and he has nothing to fear.

32.exf4 gxf4 33.g4 ♕xd4



The bishop has come to life at last. Perhaps things aren't all that bad for Black? The next few moves prove that they *are*. The black pieces are thrown back, and White achieves a completely won position.

34.♖d2 ♕g7 35.♝e1 ♖a4 36.♖xd5 ♝xe1
37.♜xe1 ♝f8 38.♜f3

A triumph of centralization! Even the black queen has no move of any use.

38...♝h8 39.♝c7 a6 40.♖b7 ♝g8 41.♜h4

Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 49

Tigran Petrosian – Rashid Nezhmetdinov

Tbilisi 1959

1.c4 ♜f6 2.♜c3 e6 3.♜f3 d5 4.d4 c6 5.e3
♜bd7 6.♕d3 dxc4 7.♕xc4 b5 8.♕b3

This continuation is seen a good deal more rarely than the classical 8.♕d3.

8...b4 9.♜e2 ♕b7

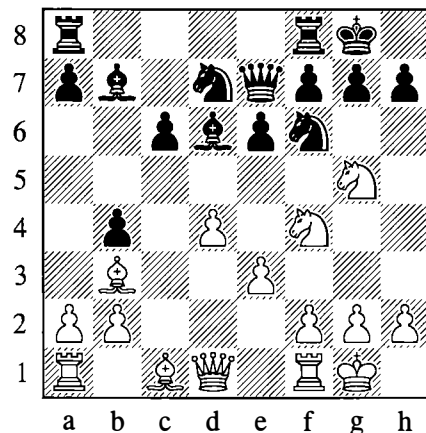
For a long time 9...♕a6 was held to be strongest, but then White is able to play 0-0, ♝e1, ♜g3 and e3-e4, giving him quite good attacking prospects. Black's 9...♕b7 pursues the aim of establishing control over e4 (after carrying out ...c6-c5).

10.0-0 ♕d6 11.♜f4 0-0 12.♜g5

"In for a penny, in for a pound." It must be said, though, that against the system of piece deployment that Black has chosen, White's cavalry attack is easily repulsed and Black obtains a comfortable game. The dashing knight sortie is the cause of White's subsequent troubles.

12...♖e7

The simplest reply, after which no sacrifices on e6 lead to any good. Black also had another strong move, 12...♖b8, at his disposal.



13. ♖d2

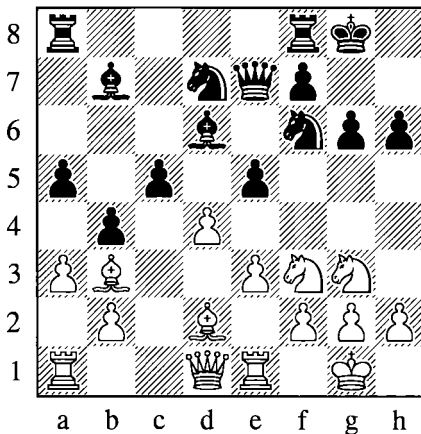
White has to make a modest developing move, since unfortunately 13.e4 doesn't work: 13...♙xf4 (better than 13...h6 14.e5 hxf5 15.exd6 ♖xd6 16.♗e2 g4 17.♙f4 ♖e7 18.♗g3, and after 19.♞e1 White has a good initiative for the pawn) 14.♙xf4 h6 15.e5 ♗d5 16.♗h3 (16.♙xd5 hxf5) 16...c5, and there is no doubt about Black's advantage.

13...a5 14.♞e1 c5! 15.a3 e5

So the flank operations of the white knights have not been justified. With counter-blows in the centre Black achieves an excellent position.

16.♗e2 h6 17.♗g3 g6

Of course 17...hxf5 is not good in view of 18.♗f5. But the simple move in the game gives Black a large plus.

18.♗f3

A critical moment. White realized that he would be badly off after 18...e4 19.♗h4 ♗d5, seeing that 20.♖g4 ♗f6 21.♖h3 ♙c8 22.♗xg6 fxf6 23.♖xh6 ♙xg3! (but not immediately 23...♖g7 24.♖xg7† ♗xg7 25.♗xe4 ♗xe4 26.♙xd5, when White has everything in order) 24.♖xg6† ♖g7 leads to a clear plus for Black.

But instead of the correct 18...e4,

Nezhmetdinov makes a redundant move with his king, which gives White the chance to escape from the chief danger through exchanges.

18...♗h7 19.dxc5 ♗xc5 20.axb4 ♗xb3 21.♖xb3 axb4?

Another mistake; 21...♙d5 would of course have left Black with more chances of retaining a plus.

22.♞xa8 ♞xa8 23.e4 ♙c8 24.h3 ♙e6 25.♖e3 ♗g8 26.♖d3 ♗g7

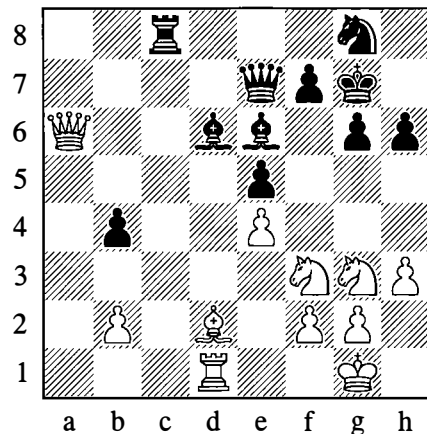
This move is essential; Black defends against the threat of 27.♗f5! which has suddenly arisen.

27.♞d1

At last White is starting to develop some activity. The threat is 28.♙xh6†.

27...♙c7 28.♖c2 ♞c8 29.♖a4 ♙d6 30.♖a6

Again setting up the threat of ♙xh6†. White's activity has noticeably increased, and we may take it that the worst is firmly behind him.

**30...♙c5?**

If this is a sacrifice, it is an unsound one. If it is a blunder, it is a most deplorable one.

31.♗xe5 ♖c7

The answer to 31...♙xh3 would be 32.♗d3 with advantage to White. Nor is 31...♙xf2†

any good; White continues 32.♔xf2 ♖c5† 33.♙e3 ♜xe5 34.♙d4, winning the queen.

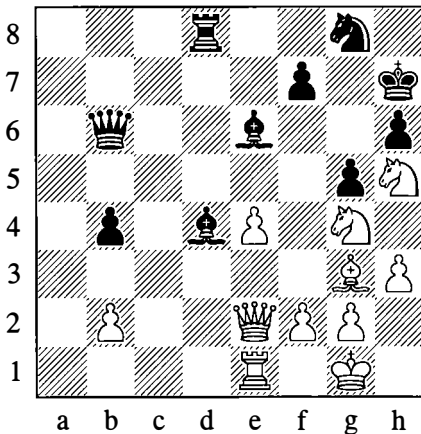
32.♙f4 g5 33.♘h5† ♕h7 34.♙g3 ♖d8

[Ed. note: After 34...♙e7, with the idea of 35...♜c2, Black's counterplay would to some extent compensate for the pawn lost. For example: 35.♘xf7 ♜c2 36.♜xe6 ♜xd1† 37.♕h2 ♜xh5 38.♘g5† ♜xg5 39.♜xc8, and Black has a piece for 3 pawns.]

35.♞e1 ♜b6 36.♜e2

At the moment White has no reason to exchange queens, since he threatens if possible to play ♕h2 and f2-f4 with a dangerous attack. Taking this into account, Black switches his dark-squared bishop to the defence of the kingside.

36...♙d4 37.♘g4



37...♙g7

[Ed. note: Black shouldn't exchange this bishop; 37...♙h8 is more tenacious. The aim is to co-ordinate the major pieces, for example 37.e5 ♜d4, or 37.♘e3 b3 with the idea of ...♜b4.]

38.♘g7 ♕xg7 39.♘e3 ♜c5 40.♜c2

Now that Black is deprived of the advantage of the bishop pair, the queen exchange favours White.

40...♜xc2 41.♘xc2 b3 42.♘d4! ♕g6

On 42...♙c4 White plays 43.♞e3, winning a second pawn.

43.♘xe6 fxe6 44.♞e3 ♘f6 45.f3

Black's position is hopeless. The loss of a second pawn cannot be avoided.

45...♞d1† 46.♕h2 h5 47.h4 g4

Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 50

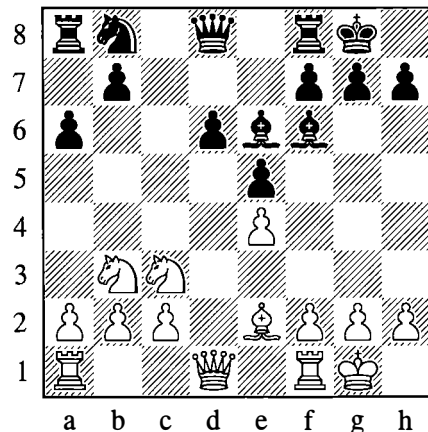
Yuri Averbakh – Tigran Petrosian

Tbilisi 1959

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♙e2 e5 7.♘b3 ♙e7 8.0-0 0-0 9.♙g5 ♙e6

Many players prefer 9...♘bd7, so as to recapture on f6 with the knight in the event of 10.♙xf6. But in that case Black has to take into consideration that his light-squared bishop can only be developed on b7 (assuming of course that White does *not* exchange on f6), which may well be a worse place for it. Still, this is all a matter of taste.

10.♙xf6 ♙xf6



11.♟d5

A natural move, but too straightforward. A more subtle one was 11.♞d3. The point is that after 11.♟d5 Black develops his knight on d7, where it is in a good position – as the further course of the game shows. After 11.♞d3 Black would not have this possibility; he would probably have to bring the knight out to c6, where it is less elastically placed.

11...♟d7 12.♞d3 ♝c8 13.c3 ♗g5

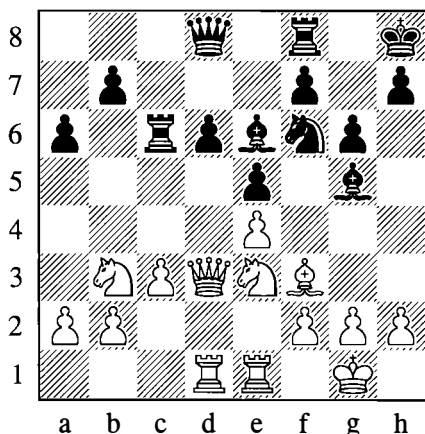
For this bishop – in appearance the “bad” one – the c1-h6 diagonal is just the right place. Here the bishop limits the manoeuvring scope of the white pieces and makes the plan involving f2-f4 more difficult to execute.

14.♞ad1

A seemingly natural move but in actual fact an inaccuracy, because the undefended state of the a2-pawn will subsequently tell. White should have played 14.♞fd1.

14...♔h8

A waiting move, granting White the right to decide on a plan for the further play.

15.♗f3 g6 16.♟e3 ♝c6 17.♞fe1 ♟f6

Black has developed his pieces successfully. The weakness of the pawn on d6 is not playing

any role. And the main thing is that Black has in mind a good plan for the coming struggle: he will advance his queenside pawns in order to open lines. This plan flows organically from the situation that has come about on the board. White, on the other hand, has no active game plan. He is practically compelled to mark time while Black improves his position.

18.♞e2 b5 19.♞a1

White himself has evidently sensed that 14.♞ad1 was a mistake.

19...♞b6 20.♟d2 a5 21.♟df1

White has come quite close to exchanging off his light-squared bishop with ♗g4. But the whole point is that the manoeuvres of the white knights are taking place under fire from the bishop on g5, and ♗g4 never actually proves possible.

21...♞f8 22.a3

Possibly 22.♞ec1 was better, aiming to meet 22...b4 with 23.c4. True, the dark squares in White's camp would then be weakened even more; but now the game opens up, in a way that clearly favours Black.

22...b4

Black would like to play 22...♟d7, bringing up his last piece to the main theatre of war, but then White *could* reply 23.♗g4. The conclusion therefore is clear: Black's position has been strengthened to the maximum, and the time has come to proceed to decisive actions. At the same time, though, it must be observed that White's position is still fairly robust notwithstanding its passivity, and breaching it will not be easy.

23.cxb4 axb4 24.a4

Relatively best. There is evidently no other possibility to undertake the slightest activity. However, the a-pawn, cut off from its base, will soon become an object of attack.

24...♖a7 25.♞ed1 ♞a6 26.♞d3 b3

Perhaps 26...♙d7 was stronger. It contains two notable traps: 27.b3 ♙b5!, or 27.♞d2 d5!. But Black wants to cut the a-pawn off from White's forces for good.

27.a5 ♞cc6

There is no hurry. After 27...♞xa5 28.♞xa5 ♞xa5 29.♞xd6, it isn't clear how Black can get at the b2-pawn.

28.♞d1 ♞c7

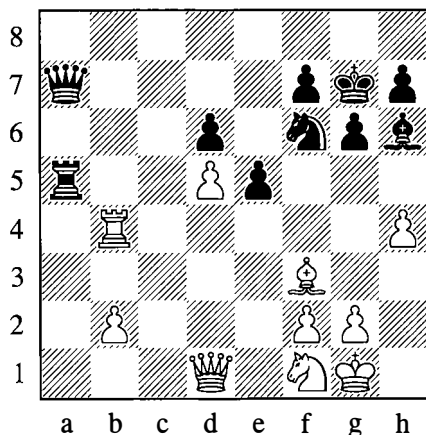
Black manoeuvres in an attempt to improve the placing of his pieces still further. In view of the threatened 29...♞c2, White's reply is virtually forced.

29.♙d5 ♙xd5 30.exd5 ♞c5 31.♞xb3 ♞axa5

Here 31...e4 looked tempting, but after 32.♙e2 ♞axa5 33.♞xa5 ♞xa5 (not 33...♞xa5, on account of 34.♞b8† and 35.b4) 34.♞b5 White holds on for the present – although even in this case Black's advantage is not in dispute. Black should continue with 34...♞xb5 35.♙xb5 ♞c5.

32.♞xa5 ♞xa5 33.♞c3 ♞b6 34.♞b3

Under pressure from the clock, White tries to gain time by attacking the queen.

34...♞a7 35.♞b4 ♔g7 36.h4 ♙h6**37.b3?**

This loses by force. After 37.g3, notwithstanding Black's clear positional plus, no direct roads to victory are discernible as yet.

37...♞a2 38.♞e1

There is no other way of defending f2.

38...♞a5

Threatening 39...♙d2!.

39.♞b1 ♞a1 40.♞b5

On 40.♞a4, Black would play 40...♞xa4!.

40...♞c3!

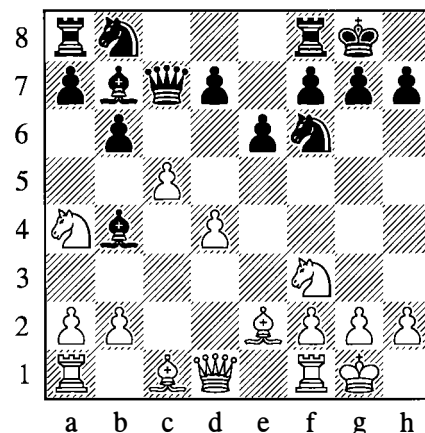
"Checkmating" the enemy queen! White resigned.

0-1

GAME 51**Tigran Petrosian – Aleksandar Matanovic**

Kiev 1959

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e3 c5 5.♘f3
0-0 6.♙e2 b6 7.0-0 ♙b7 8.♘a4 cxd4 9.exd4
♞c7 10.c5!



Black has set his hopes on a counter-attack based on a knight sortie to g4, and left his bishop on b4 in rather an unenviable situation.

10...bxc5

After 10...♟g4 11.g3 (if 11.h3 then 11...♟xf3 12.hxg4 ♟xe2 13.♟xe2 ♟c6!) 11...bxc5 12.a3 ♟a5 13.dxc5 ♟c6 14.b4 ♟e5 15.♟g2!, White acquires a plus.

11.a3 ♟a5 12.dxc5 ♟g4 13.h3

Immediately after the game, the Yugoslav Grandmaster asserted that 13.g3 was inadequate in view of 13...♟c6, threatening 14...♟e5. But this is the situation that would have arisen from 10...♟g4 (instead of 10...bxc5) – see the note to that move.

What conclusion can be drawn from this? We cannot agree that 13.g3 is inadequate; indeed it would seem to be strongest.

13...♟xf3 14.hxg4 ♟xe2 15.♟xe2 ♟c6 16.b3

Best. Without encumbering the c- and d-files with pieces, White prevents the advance of the backward d-pawn by indirect means. At this point the unpleasant answer to 16...d6 would be 17.cxd6 ♟xd6 18.♟d1, with strong pressure.

16...♟c7 17.♟d1 ♟a6

And now 17...d6 18.cxd6 ♟xd6 allows White to create some concrete threats: after 19.♟b2 Black has nothing better than 19...♟e7, but then there follows 20.♟ac1 ♟b7 21.♟c5 ♟xc5 22.♟e5 ♟xf2† 23.♟xf2 f6 24.♟xe6† ♟h8 25.♟d5!, and White should gradually achieve the win.

18.♟e3 f5 19.gxf5 ♟xf5

Why didn't Black retake on f5 with the pawn? After all, the advantages are obvious: the threat to push the pawn as far as f3, the possibility of switching the queen to the kingside, and indeed the open e-file which is

far more important than the f-file.

All these are weighty arguments that speak for 19...exf5.

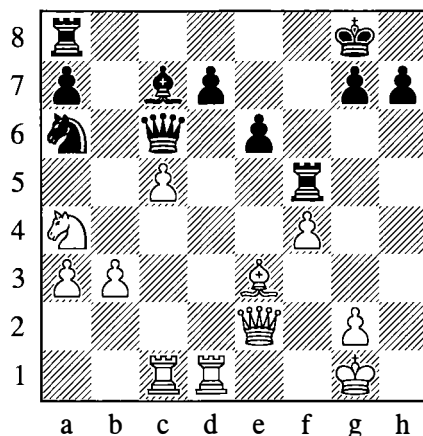
The continuation could be 20.♟c4† ♟h8 21.♟d5. The struggle would not proceed on forced lines, and demonstrating White's advantage with variations is not easy. By combining pressure in the d-file with the advance of the b-pawn (after bringing back his knight that is stranded on a4), he would preserve the better chances. Nonetheless after 19...exf5 the fight would be double-edged, whereas after the move in the game, White has a significant plus.

20.♟ac1 ♟e5?

He had to play 20...♟af8. He could then answer 21.♟b6 with 21...♟b8. On 21.♟c3 he could play 21...♟f4 (not 21...♟xc5 22.b4 ♟b3 23.♟c2, and White should win), and although White would stand better after 22.b4 ♟xe3 23.fxe3 ♟f2 24.♟g4, Black could defend stubbornly.

21.f4! ♟c7

It isn't hard to see that capturing on f4 is unplayable.



22.♟b6! axb6 23.cxb6 ♟b7 24.♟xd7

Black's position has collapsed.

24...♟f7 25.♞xf7 ♔xf7 26.bxc7 ♞c8
 27.♞h5† ♔f8 28.♞d1 ♞xc7 29.♞xh7 ♞c3
 30.♞d4

Black resigned.

1–0

Petrosian went to the 1959 Candidates Tournament in Yugoslavia as one of the favourites. How else could the Soviet Champion's chances be rated? And indeed at the very start he seemed to be demonstrating his ambitions, registering three wins and three draws. However, after suffering two defeats in a row, he lost his taste for the game and practically abandoned the fight for first place.

The question why Petrosian backed off from the competition is a highly complex one. Psychological factors are of paramount importance here. The incisiveness and pace of the tournament contest may not have suited him. Petrosian had an advance feeling for dangers that a bystander would never notice, and he knew when not to take a risk. Hence the draws, the short games.

Summing up the results of the Candidates Tournament, Mikhail Tal regretfully noted: "The USSR Champion, Petrosian, might have expected a higher placing. But his play was lacking in enthusiasm, and this affected his results. He drew a large number of games and didn't participate in the struggle to be first."

Petrosian's tournament strategy proved adequate for third place, a respectable result for him. It was only Keres, the "eternal second" in the qualification cycles of the Botvinnik era, who had truly competed with the irrepressible Tal.

Some games from the opening phase of the tournament displayed Petrosian's genuine potential in its full splendour. Among these were his games with the West's rising star, the sixteen-year-old Bobby Fischer.

GAME 52

Robert James Fischer – Tigran Petrosian

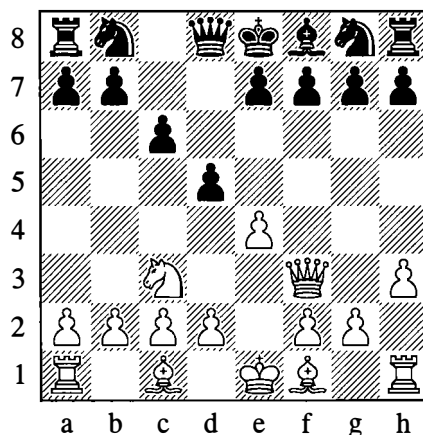
Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade 1959

Notes by V. Simagin

1.e4 c6 2.♘c3

The Classical continuation 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 is seen more often in tournament practice. The system of development chosen by Fischer has been investigated less.

2...d5 3.♘f3 ♞g4 4.h3 ♞xf3 5.♞xf3



5...♘f6

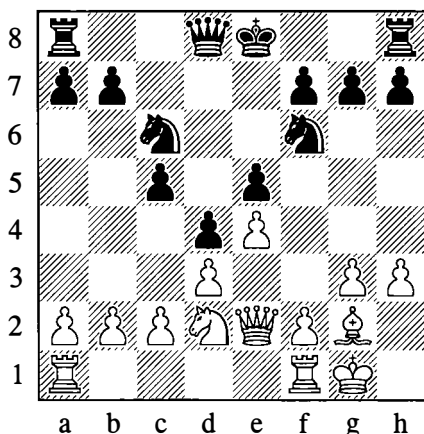
Nearly all manuals on the openings indicate 5...e6 at this point, whereupon by playing 6.d4 dxe4 7.♞xe4 White attains an attacking position without any material sacrifices. Petrosian's continuation is more exact, since 6.d4 now entails the unclear pawn sacrifice 6...dxe4 7.♘xe4 ♞xd4.

6.d3

White doesn't venture on the sacrifice mentioned, and this perhaps is a first success for Black, as the passive continuation in the game can hardly lead to an opening advantage.

6...e6 7.g3 ♖b4 8.♙d2 d4

As a result of this manoeuvre Black falls somewhat behind in development. A possibility was 8...♗b6 9.0-0-0 (Black was threatening 9...d4) 9...d4 10.♘e2 ♙xd2† 11.♙xd2 ♘bd7, with an equal game.

9.♘b1 ♙xd2† 10.♘xd2 e5 11.♙g2 c5 12.0-0 ♘c6 13.♗e2**13...g5?!**

This sharp continuation testifies that Petrosian is in a fighting mood. The ensuing struggle will be carried on with the kings castled on opposite wings. Black's strategic idea consists of limiting the mobility of White's light-squared bishop.

Quiet variations were also playable, for instance: 13...0-0 14.f4 exf4 15.gxf4 ♙e8 with quite a good game for Black.

14.♘f3

After this, Black's plan ultimately justifies itself. The only way for White to utilize his lead in development was 14.f4 gxf4 15.gxf4 ♗e7 16.♘c4 ♘d7 17.♗g4, with the initiative.

14...h6 15.h4!

An indispensable manoeuvre! For the moment Black's pawn on g5 is turned into a weakness.

15...♙g8

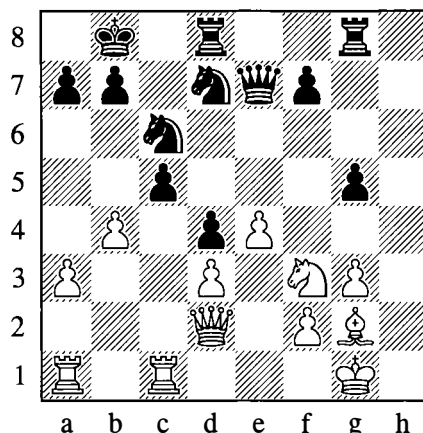
The continuation 15...g4 16.♘h2 h5 17.f3 favours White.

16.a3 ♗e7 17.hxg5 hxg5 18.♗d2 ♘d7 19.c3

White starts preparing an attack on the queenside.

19...0-0-0 20.cxd4 exd4!

Playing for a win, Petrosian continues to sharpen the play. In the event of 20...cxd4 21.b4 ♗f6 22.♙fc1 ♘b8, the chances would be roughly equal.

21.b4! ♘b8 22.♙fc1

A very tense situation has arisen! The points in Black's favour are that the white bishop is out of play, the d3-pawn may prove very weak, and the e5-square will be taken over by a knight. Nonetheless the initiative is in White's hands for the present, and his attack on the c- and b-files can become dangerous. Moreover after the exchange bxc5, the black pawn on d4 will require constant defence. Petrosian therefore takes the decision to exchange one pair of minor pieces to reduce White's pressure. Of course, 22...cxb4 23.axb4 ♗xb4 would be bad on account of 24.♗a2.

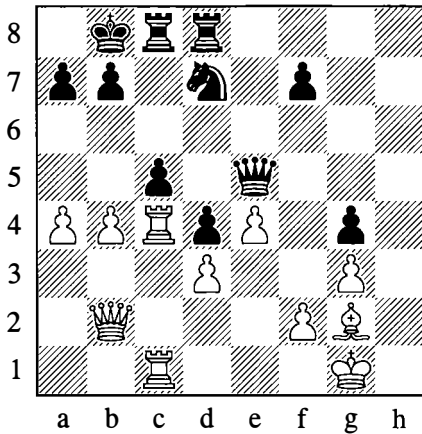
22...♘ce5 23.♘xe5 ♗xe5 24.♙c4 ♙c8

25.♖ac1

On 25.♖b1, the variation 25...g4 26.bxc5 ♜xc5 27.♖b4 would be to White's advantage. However, with 25...♞c7! Black could defend.

25...g4 26.♖b2 ♞gd8 27.a4?

A grave error, after which Black wrests the initiative from his opponent and attains a decisive plus. White should have played 27.♙f1 and 28.♙e2.

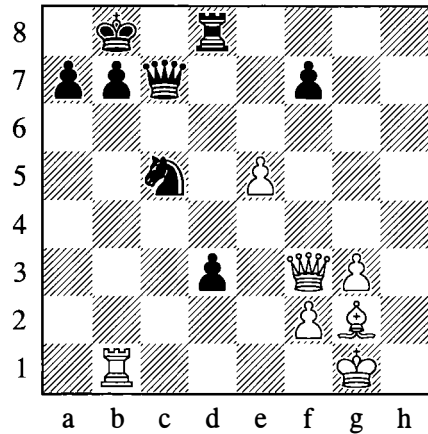
**27...♞e7!**

After this manoeuvre, the pawns on d3 and b4 are under threat. The unfortunate thing for White is that 28.bxc5 has become unplayable in view of 28...♙e5! 29.♞xd4 ♜xd3.

28.♖b1

White surrenders a pawn. With 28.♞d1 he could preserve material equality, but after 28...♙e5 29.♞xc5 ♞xc5 30.bxc5 ♖xc5 Black would acquire a large positional advantage.

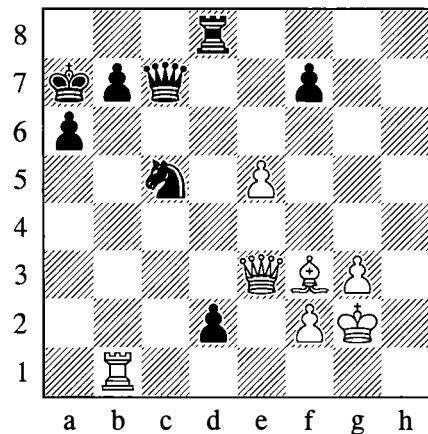
28...♙e5 29.♞xc5 ♞xc5 30.bxc5 ♜xd3 31.♖d2 ♜xc5 32.♖f4 ♖c7 33.♖xg4 ♜xa4 34.e5 ♜c5 35.♖f3 d3!



Black's advantage lies in his mighty passed pawn.

36.♖e3 d2 37.♙f3 ♜a4 38.♖e4 ♜c5 39.♖e2 a6 40.♙g2 ♜a7 41.♖e3

Time trouble is over. In this position the game was adjourned.



41...♞d3 42.♖f4 ♖d7 43.♖c4 b6 44.♞d1 a5 45.♖f4 ♞d4 46.♖h6

Black has arranged all his pieces in the best possible way, and it looks as if the rest is a matter of technique. Often, however, such "technical" positions require a player to exert all his imaginative powers.

Unable to bring about a queen exchange, Black is obliged to advance his pawns in the

face of the white queen's activity; and this means that the intensity of the struggle persists until the end.

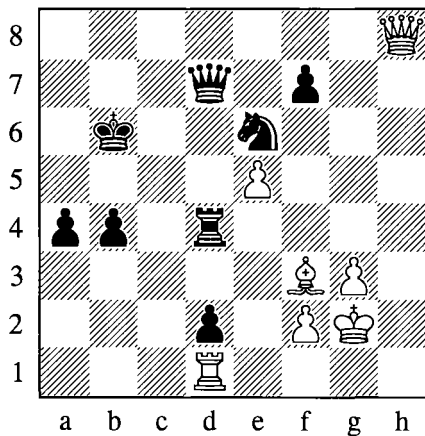
46...b5 47.♖e3

Black could meet 47.♖f8 with 47...♗c7 48.♗a8† ♔b6.

47...♔b6 48.♗h6† ♚e6 49.♗e3 ♔a6 50.♙e2

White cannot create serious threats in view of the passive position of his rook, whose actions are paralysed by the black passed pawn.

50...a4 51.♗c3 ♔b6 52.♗e3 ♚c5 53.♙f3 b4 54.♗h6† ♚e6 55.♗h8 ♗d8 56.♗h7 ♗d7 57.♗h8



57...b3!

The simplest solution. The black king finds shelter on the white queen's wing, where it will be better protected than at home.

58.♗b8† ♔a5 59.♗a8† ♔b5

Not 59...♔b4 60.♙e6.

60.♗b8† ♔c4!

The king finds the right path to evade the queen's attacks.

61.♗g8 ♔c3 62.♙h5 ♚d8

Petrosian doesn't wish to give anything away. It was possible to continue simply with 62...a3 63.♙xf7 ♗d5† 64.♔g1 ♗f3.

63.♙f3 a3 64.♗f8 ♔b2 65.♗h8 ♚e6 66.♗a8 a2 67.♗a5 ♗a4! 68.♙xd2† ♔a3

White resigned.

0-1

GAME 53

Tigran Petrosian – Svetozar Gligoric

Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade 1959

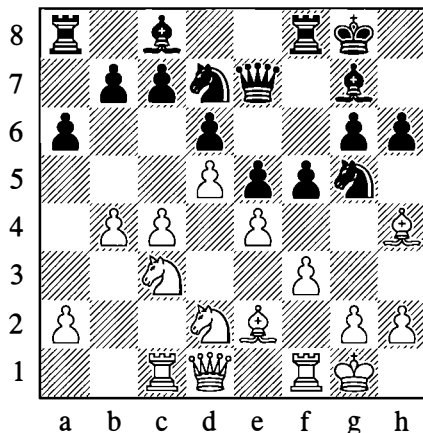
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♚c3 ♙g7 4.e4 d6 5.♚f3 0-0 6.♙e2 e5 7.d5 ♚bd7 8.♙g5

Interestingly White chose the system with 8.♙g5 in five games in the Candidates Tournament, and invariably achieved success.

8...h6 9.♙h4 a6 10.♚d2 ♗e8 11.0-0 ♚h7 12.b4 ♚g5

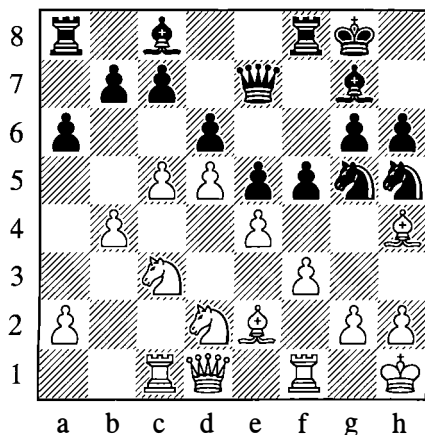
Black is forced to play this move in order to make ...f7-f5 possible. The immediate 12...f5 is bad in view of 13.exf5 gxf5 (13...♙xf5 is also inadequate) 14.♙h5!.

13.♙c1 f5 14.f3 ♗e7



15.♖h1!

This continuation, transposing into Olafsson – Gligoric, Yugoslavia 1959, is stronger than 15.♙f2, which would transpose to Tal – Fischer from the 1959 Candidates Tournament. Although from f2 the bishop does help to carry out the c4-c5 advance, there is more need for it on the h4-d8 diagonal. In order to develop his queenside pieces, Black will have to transfer his knight from d7 to the kingside, and then White can proceed with c4-c5 unhindered.

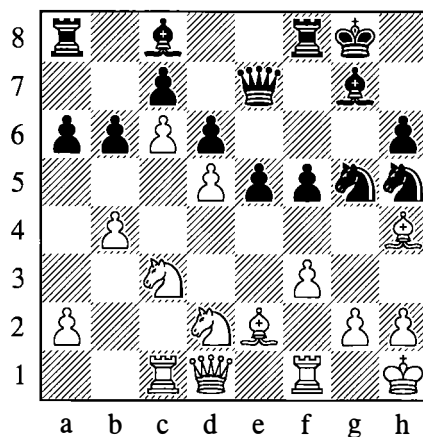
15...♘f6 16.c5 ♖h5

Of course it wouldn't pay Black to capture twice on c5, as his pawn on c7 would then be lost. Up to here, both opponents had been playing very quickly. I was keen to put into practice a positional idea that had caught my attention while I was watching the Olafsson – Gligoric game. Not suspecting the danger, the Yugoslav Champion has come close to reaching the familiar position that *he* has been aiming for.

17.c6

At first sight this looks rather innocuous. It's clear that an exchange of pawns on c6 cannot suit Black at all. White's game would then be simple to play, based on utilizing the d5-point

and advancing his a- and b-pawns. Allowing an exchange on b7 is also none too attractive for Black. But why shouldn't 17...b6 be playable? Won't White's queenside offensive then be at a dead end, while Black's pieces on the kingside look very impressive? Despite this, White does have ways to develop his initiative.

17...b6 18.exf5 gxf5**19.g3!**

White's idea is simple – to play 20.f4. Now 19...f4 20.g4 ♖f6 is bad for Black in view of 21.♙xg5 followed by 22.♘de4.

19...♙f6

In the event of 19...♖f6, White had in mind the variation 20.f4 exf4 21.gxf4 ♖ge4 22.♙h5!.

20.f4 ♖g7

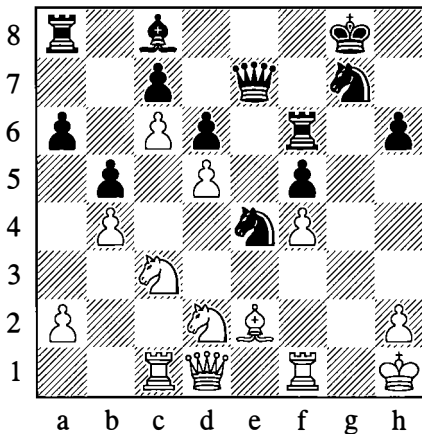
Black has managed to avoid losing material, but his position is difficult. The pawns on c6 and d5 have deprived his queen's bishop of all its squares. White only needs to play 21.a4 here, and the outcome of the game is hardly in any doubt. Virtually a rook and bishop down, Black would not be able to offer serious resistance, even though the closed nature of the position would give White a certain amount of trouble in accomplishing his task.

21. ♖c4

It was tempting to play 21.fxe5. In the event of 21...dxe5 22.♖c4, the breakthrough with d5-d6 is highly unpleasant. However, Black could take on e5 with his bishop; then after 22.♖c4 f4 his pieces would come to life.

21...exf4 22.gxf4 b5

In his difficult position Gligoric exploits one of his few chances, fixing the pawn on b4 and ensuring the opening of the a-file for his rook. At this point I didn't like the natural 23.♖a5 on account of 23...♙xc3 24.♗xc3 ♖e4† 25.♕g1 ♗xb4 26.♙e1 ♖e4.

23. ♖d2 ♖e4 24. ♙xf6 ♗xf6**25. ♙f3**

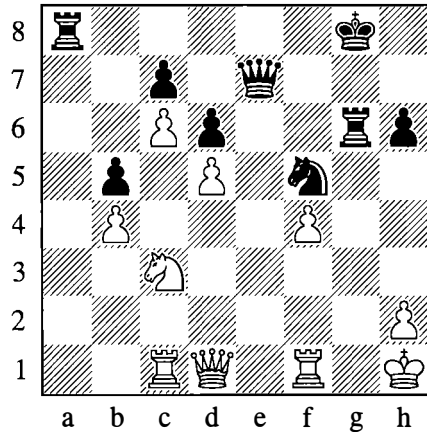
Another inaccuracy. The thematic move 25.♖b3 would entail a pawn sacrifice: 25...♖xc3 26.♗xc3 ♖e4†. But then by continuing 27.♗cf3! ♗xb4 28.♗g1, White would descend upon his opponent's kingside. At this stage it still seemed to me that my position was so strong that I could win without recourse to drastic measures.

25...a5 26.a3 axb4 27.axb4 ♗g6

On 27...♙a3 I intended 28.♖db1, so as to answer 28...♙a1 with 29.♗d4.

28. ♖dx4

Time trouble was setting in, and I didn't like the idea of a raid by black's rook on the a-file combined with his queen coming to e3 or h4. A pawn is a cheap price for him to pay to bring two minor pieces back to life.

28...fxe4 29.♙xe4 ♙f5 30.♙xf5 ♖xf5**31. ♗h5**

[Ed. note: Black's defence would be more difficult after 31.♗d3!, for instance: 31...♗f8 32.♗ce1 ♗h4 33.♗g1, with further material gains.]

31...♗f6!

The only move; 31...♗f7 would lose quickly to 32.♗xg6† ♗xg6 33.♗g1.

32. ♗g1† ♖h8 33. ♗ce1 ♗f7 34. ♗xf7 ♗xf7 35. ♗e4 ♖h7

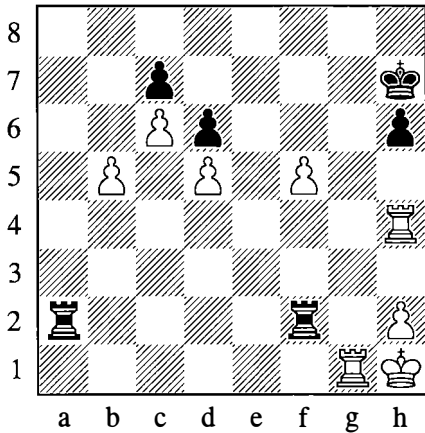
Another possibility is 35...♗b8. Then if a white rook heads for a5, Black obtains counterplay by doubling rooks on the g-file. The move Gligoric plays is better.

36. ♖xb5 ♙a2 37. ♖d4

After this, Black's other rook too penetrates to the second rank. But White had nothing else.

37...♖xd4 38.♗xd4 ♜e7 39.f5 ♞e2 40.♗h4
♞f2 41.b5

The time control has been reached, and by making an obvious move White “invites” his opponent to make the no less obvious reply.



41...♞ab2?

Yet another example of how even the most natural move, which seemingly complies with all the rules of chess strategy, may prove to be a gross error. The curious fact is that Gligoric made this move without thinking. After even a short think, he would undoubtedly have played 41...♞ac2, and his brilliant defence would have been rewarded. The game would then probably have ended in a draw.

42.b6!

Black now thought for forty minutes over his sealed move, but alas, there was no longer any salvation.

42...♞xb6

On 42...cxb6, White wins as follows: 43.♞c1 ♞bc2 44.♞xc2 ♞xc2 45.♞g4!, and one of the white pawns will queen.

43.♞hg4 ♞b8 44.♞g7† ♖h8 45.♞7g6

If 45...♖h7, then 46.f6 ♞f8 47.♞g7† ♖h8 48.♞xc7 is decisive. Black resigned.

1-0

For his successful play in the Candidates Tournament, Petrosian was in many ways indebted to his coach, Isaak Boleslavsky. After his victory in the Soviet Championship, there was every reason for Tigran to step up to a new level in the struggle for the chess crown, but to accomplish this task he needed a coach's solid support.

“In 1959,” Petrosian recalls, “I approached Isaak Efremovich, not without some diffidence, with a proposal for chess co-operation. A player of world class and a welcome assistant for any chessplayer at all, he was in a position to choose a client to his own taste, and frankly speaking I was not only glad but rather surprised when he agreed.”

It wasn't from hearsay that Boleslavsky knew about the thorny path awaiting a candidate in contention for the world crown. He had trodden that path himself: in the Candidates Tournament of 1950 he had shared 1st-2nd places with Bronstein and lost out in the play-off match. It was with Petrosian's successful performance in the 1959 Candidates that his creative association with Boleslavsky began. It was to last for many years.

Much later, Tigran was to write the preface to the book *Grandmaster Boleslavsky* (“Physical Culture and Sport” publishers, Moscow 1981), in which he spoke of his assistant with warmth.

“There are not many high-ranking players who have chosen to lead the life of a coach in relatively early years. Bondarevsky, Boleslavsky, Furman, Tolush... it wouldn't be easy to continue the list. Their fortunes in life were different, so were their characters, so were their views on chess. Each of them had his own unique approach to formulating and solving those problems of chess and life which arise in the course of long-term collaboration. Unfortunately it must be stated that all of them departed this life at a decidedly early age (who knows how many grey hairs they

had accumulated while their clients were performing in crucial contests?) and took their coaching ‘secrets’ with them. Once when I was talking to Spassky he recollected some exercises that Bondarevsky had thought up specially for him. In the ex-World Champion’s own words, ‘After those exercises, it was if the sun came out inside my brain.’

“Recalling our work together over the course of ten years, it was with astonishment that I noted the following. On the one hand my association with Boleslavsky brought immense benefit, which went far beyond the confines of adjournment analysis and consultations on the subject of openings. And yet all the while there was a complete absence of any specific chess exercises. Our work sessions, in which other players would also sometimes participate, took the form of discussions. Each of us was prepared to set forth his case and defend it, sometimes subjecting the other one to some fairly biting criticism. *I* was never keen on placing the knowledge of openings in the foreground. The habit of playing various lines without being afraid of bad positions had gradually instilled in me a faith that difficult positions were defensible – it had developed my skills for handling them. And so in the course of our analysis, true to myself, I would sometimes recommend a move that rather lacked the hallmark of quality. In such cases Isaak Efremovich didn’t even argue, let alone refute the move. He would just say, ‘if you want to play like that, there’s no need to prepare’ – and the matter was considered closed. But it must have been quite amusing to watch us when we failed to see eye to eye in the analysis of a serious problem. We would both ‘dig our heels in’, although in all those years there was practically no occasion when our relations were spoilt on account of the commotions on the chessboard that were only inevitable. We always showed correct regard for each other’s chess qualities. Isaak Efremovich did so

because he was a model of delicacy towards his client, and I did so out of sincere respect for him.

“There were cases where my viewpoint prevailed. Isaak Efremovich couldn’t change my mind by giving variations, and there the matter ended.

“We continued on our way together. But here is what happened more than once, when we were starting our next training session after quite a long interval. Before we went to work on the topic agreed for this session, my coach would set up the chess pieces in a position we had examined long before; and with olympian composure, behind which I detected his feeling of triumph at proving the justice of his case, he would din into me what we had previously overlooked.

“Before the World Championship match in 1963, chess fans would often ask me: ‘Who is your second, and how good is he?’ I replied, ‘Boleslavsky is an excellent second and a faithful friend. If I lose the match, he won’t be responsible.’ But in all the successes I achieved during the time we worked together, the ‘responsibility’ of Isaak Efremovich *was* very great, and I shall always preserve grateful memories of this remarkable chessplayer and man.”

* * *

In the 27th USSR Championship, which took place at the start of 1960 in Leningrad, Petrosian’s results alternated between wins and short draws, and by round 16 he was heading the tournament table together with Korchnoi. It seemed within his power to repeat his Tbilisi success, but events at the finish took a dramatic turn for him. The angina from which he suffered put in an untimely appearance. He had to postpone two games and play his eighteenth-round game in a hotel. The result was a short draw with Bagirov, and a loss to

Averbakh in one of the games that had been postponed. And although Petrosian defeated Spassky in the second of his postponed games and won in the last round against Krogus, this was only enough to share 2nd-3rd places with Geller. It was Korchnoi who became USSR Champion.

GAME 54

Tigran Petrosian – Alexey Suetin

Leningrad 1960

1.c4 c5 2.♖c3 ♘f6 3.♗f3 ♘c6 4.e3 e6 5.d4 d5

By transposition of moves, a well-known position from the Tarrasch Defence has been reached.

6.cxd5

In answer to 6.a3 which is often played, 6...♗e4 promises Black equality.

6...exd5 7.♗e2 a6 8.0-0 c4

Now, somewhat unexpectedly, a position characteristic of the Panov Attack in the Caro-Kann has arisen with colours reversed.

9.♗e5 ♖c7 10.♗xc6

The aggressive 10.f4 has some serious positional drawbacks: the light squares are suddenly weakened, and the “hole” formed on e4 is particularly sensitive. Black could reply 10...♗b4, with a view to ...♗xc3 and ...♗f5, enabling him to seize control of the light squares – while the white pieces, other than the strong knight on e5, would be occupying passive positions.

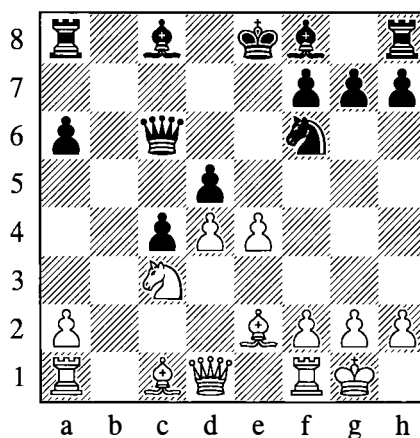
10...♖xc6

He could also play 10...bxc6, whereupon White intended 11.b3.

11.b3 b5?

The first slip. Black neglects the opportunity to bring a piece out with tempo, which is vital when you consider his backwardness in development. After 11...♗b4 12.♗d2 b5 13.bxc4 bxc4 the black position would be readily defensible, but now White obtains a strong attack without difficulty.

12.bxc4 bxc4 13.e4



13...dxe4?

The decisive error. After the correct 13...♗xe4 14.♗xe4 dxe4 15.d5 ♖g6, it isn't so simple for White to find the right continuation. Still, by playing 16.♗h5 ♖f5 17.♖e1, he would retain the initiative.

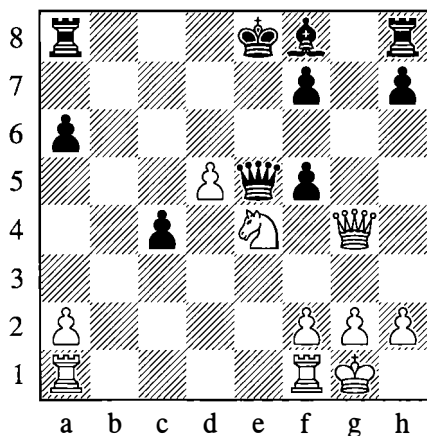
14.♗g5 ♗f5

A slight improvement was 14...♗e7.

15.d5 ♖c7 16.♗xf6 gxf6 17.♗g4! ♗xg4

On 17...♗g6 White has the decisive 18.♗xe4, which cannot be met by 18...♗xe4 19.♖e1 ♖e5, on account of 20.♖a4† and mate next move.

18.♖xg4 ♖e5 19.♗xe4 f5



20.♖h5! 0-0-0 21.♘d2!

Black would obtain good chances for resistance after 21.♘g5 ♖g8, whereas now his position immediately becomes hopeless.

21...c3 22.♘c4 ♗d4 23.♗xf5† ♜d7

On 23...♘c7, White could take another pawn: 24.♗xf7† ♜d7 25.♗e6 with an easily won position.

24.♘e5

Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 55

Tigran Petrosian – Mark Taimanov

Leningrad 1960

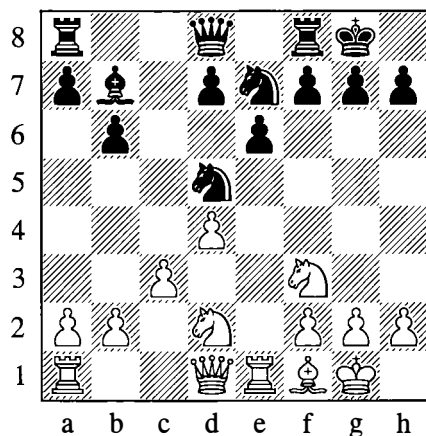
1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.♗g5 c5 4.e3 ♘c6
5.♘bd2 b6 6.c3 ♗e7 7.♗d3 0-0 8.0-0 cxd4

Black hastens to simplify the game. It was worth considering 8...♗b7, leaving it to White to choose the continuation (9.e4 is not good in view of 9...cxd4 10.cxd4 ♘b4).

9.exd4 ♘d5 10.♗xe7 ♘cxe7 11.♗e1 ♗b7
12.♗f1

White doesn't need his bishop on d3, as he aims to start active operations on the

queenside, not the kingside. He therefore removes the bishop in advance from an attack that might come from f4.



12...f5

This move, weakening the black pawn chain, is the cause of subsequent troubles. Black has no reason to count on seizing the initiative, and therefore the cautious 12...d6, followed by 13...♗c8, would be more in keeping with the demands of the position.

13.♘e5 ♗c7 14.♗c1 ♗ae8 15.c4 ♘f6
16.♗b3

White's pressure on the queenside is growing all the time, while Black as yet has no threats on the kingside.

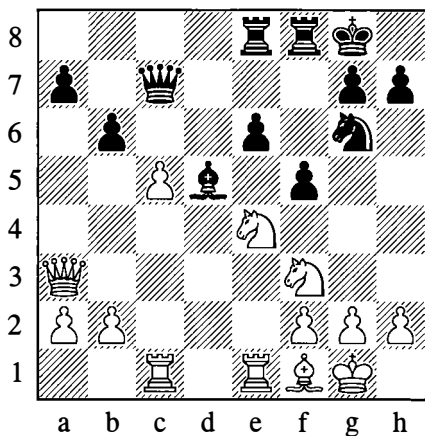
16...d6 17.♘ef3 ♘g6 18.c5! ♗d5 19.♗a3

The position in the centre opens up to White's advantage, his pieces being more harmoniously placed. Black is obliged to think about defence.

19...dxc5 20.dxc5 ♘e4

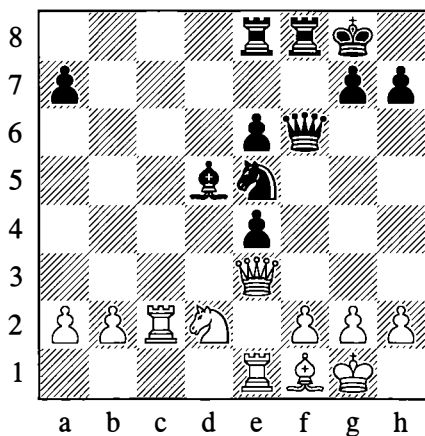
On 20...e5, play continues: 21.cxb6 ♗xb6 22.♘c4 ♗xc4 (otherwise 23.♘d6) 23.♗xc4† ♘h8 24.♗a6, and White stands better.

21.♘xe4

**21...fxe4**

This appears to be the decisive mistake. After this exchange Black has the chance to play a few active moves, but they produce no effect, while the pawn on e4 proves hopelessly weak. After 21...♙e4 White would still have the advantage, but no straightforward way of exploiting it is to be seen.

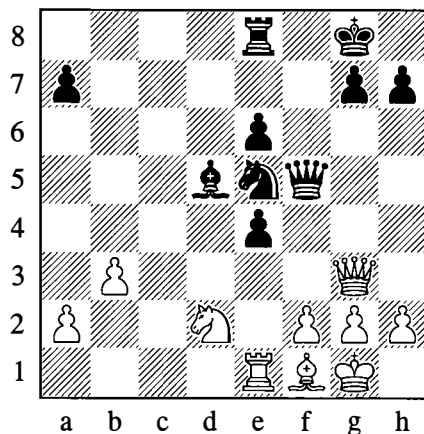
22.♘d2 ♖f4 23.♗e3 bxc5 24.♙xc5 ♗f6
25.♙c2 ♘e5

**26.♗g3**

Of course not 26.♘e4 on account of 26...♗g6, with threats of 27...♘f3† and 27...♘g4. Now 26...♘d3 27.♘e4 ♙xe4 28.♙xe4 ♘xb2 29.♙b4 is bad for Black.

26...♗f5 27.♙c7 ♙f7 28.♙xf7 ♘xf7 29.b3
♘e5

In time trouble Black overlooks a tactical stroke. After 29...♙c8 30.♙a6 ♙a8 31.♗e3 ♘d6 he could still have avoided material losses.



30.f3! e3 31.♙xe3 ♘c6 32.♘e4 ♙f8 33.♘g5
♗f6

Another oversight, but in a position that was already hopeless.

34.♘xe6 ♙e8 35.♘xg7 ♙xe3 36.♘f5† ♘f8
37.♘xe3

Black comes out three pawns down. The rest is plain sailing.

37...♗d4 38.♗f2 ♙f7 39.h3 ♘b4 40.a3 ♘a2
41.♘c4 ♗xf2† 42.♘xf2 ♘c1 43.b4 ♘a2
44.♘e3

Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 56

Tigran Petrosian – Eduard Gufeld

Leningrad 1960

Notes by E. Gufeld

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♖c3 ♗g7 4.e4 0-0 5.♖f3
d6 6.♗e2 e5 7.d5 ♖h5

Understandably the closing of the centre directs Black to try for the undermining stroke ...f7-f5, but this natural-looking move in the present position is not best. Black doesn't succeed in carrying out ...f7-f5 without positional concessions. However, I wasn't keen to play on Petrosian's "home territory" (7...♖bd7 8.♗g5).

8.g3 ♖a6

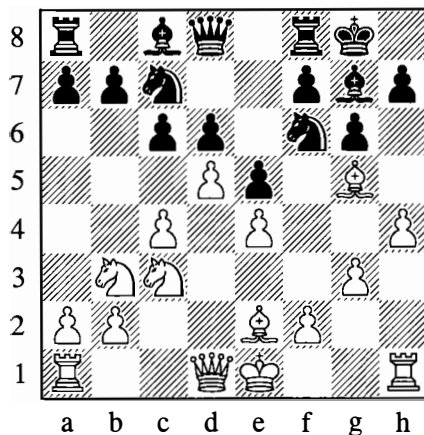
White answers 8...f5?! with the simple 9.exf5. Then both 9...gxf5? 10.♖xe5, and 9...♗xf5 10.♖g5 are unplayable for Black. Petrosian – I. Zaitsev, Moscow 1966, continued instead with 9...♗f6 10.♖g5! ♗xf5 11.0-0 ♖f6 12.f3, after which White establishes one of his pieces on e4.

On 8...a5, White may play 9.♖d2 ♖f6 10.h4 as in the present game.

9.♖d2 ♖f6 10.h4!

Boleslavsky writes: "An important link in White's plan. Now 10...♗h6, with the aim of exchanging off the dark-squared bishops, is met by 11.h5, and Black is in a bad way. Quite apart from that, the threat of a further advance of the white pawn compels Black to renounce ...f7-f5 for a long time to come." Nevertheless, as long as White has not finished his development, Black's problems seem to me to be exaggerated.

10...c6 11.♖b3 ♖c7 12.♗g5



12...cxd5

"Despite the fact that this move clears up the situation in the centre, I am inclined to consider it the decisive error," writes Gulko. It's amazing how lightly a well-known grandmaster passes sentence on a routine opening exchange!

13.cxd5 h6 14.♗xf6 ♗xf6

None of my correspondence chess opponents has commented on this exchange, which has the aim of leaving Black with the "bad" bishop. To achieve this, White has not spared his own "good" one. This idea reminds me of the anecdote about the man who decided to pluck out one of his own eyes so that his mother-in-law would have a one-eyed son-in-law. I don't think that Petrosian, with his good sense of humour, would take the comparison amiss.

15.♗g4?

A serious mistake, to which Gulko accords an exclamation mark. (Amusingly, the "Encyclopaedia" also evaluates 15.♗g4 positively.)

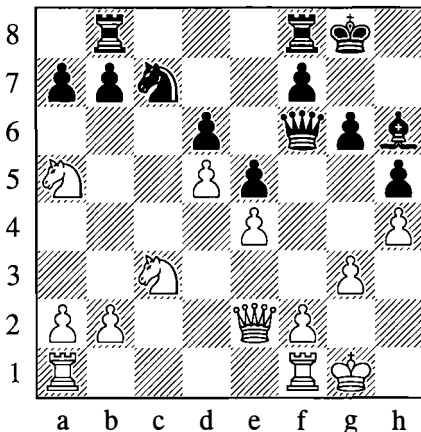
The only way to cast doubt on Black's strategy was 15.h5!, seeing that 15...g5 would transform the bishop on g7 into something totally voiceless. I would therefore have been compelled to allow a weakening of my kingside pawn structure and to open up the h-file for

White. But even in that case, after 15...♖g5 16.hxg6 f5!?, Black's prospects would not be at all worse. As it is, his position simply deserves preference.

15...h5 16.♙xc8 ♖axc8 17.♚e2 ♙h6

According to Gulko, this bishop is “attacking nothing and taking no part in active operations”. Yet it *is* keeping control of the square c1 – White's base for concentrating his major pieces on the c-file. And I was haunted by the magical power of controlling that square.

18.♘a5 ♖b8 19.0–0



19...♗f8

My chief mistake in this game lay in my conventional approach. The plan of doubling rooks on the c-file is unpromising. Here, Boris is absolutely right – the entire White army has deserted the kingside, and I needed to initiate play there at once, with 19...♚e7, followed by ...♘c7-e8-g7 and ...f7-f5, and then if possible ...f5-f4, ...g6-g5 etc. After the disappearance of both White's bishops, the advanced position of the foot soldiers that are supposed to be defending his king is especially inept. This plan looks so inviting that my timidity at that juncture amazes me to this day. It's interesting that while indicating the right plan for Black,

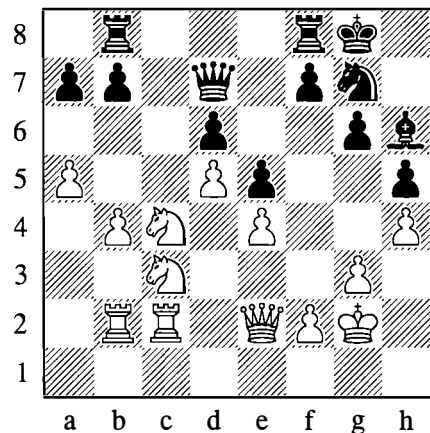
Gulko comes to the mistaken conclusion that White has the advantage.

Now, while I am marking time, Petrosian gives me an object lesson in recognizing that, in chess as in life, time cannot be turned back. His genius is displayed in the way he circumvents the “minefield” of the c1-square (with a2-a4, b2-b3, ♖a1-a2-c2 and ♗f1-b1-b2) and succeeds in working up a decisive queenside onslaught. A plan like that is difficult to hit upon, and highly instructive. “Iron Tigran” quite simply trims the board down to seven ranks, after which it turns out that my bishop is indeed shooting into empty space.

20.a4 ♚d8 21.♘c4 ♘e8 22.♖a2 ♚c7

Now in the course of the next few moves, notwithstanding the loss of time, I ought to have transferred my knight to g7 and my rook to f8 in preparation for ...f7-f5, seeing that a waiting game holds no bright prospects for Black. But unfortunately I only reverted to the correct plan when it was too late.

23.b3 ♚d7 24.♙g2 ♖c5 25.♖b1 ♖cc8 26.♖c2 ♘c7 27.♖bb2 ♖f8 28.b4 ♘e8 29.a5 ♘g7



30.a6! bxa6

The alternative 30...b6 31.♘a3 f5 32.♘cb5 f4 33.♖b3 is also insufficient.

31.♠a5 f5 32.♠c6 ♖be8 33.♠b1 ♙h7
 34.♖b3 fxe4 35.♙xe4 ♖f5 36.♖a3 ♙b7
 37.♠c3 ♖ef8 38.♙c4

Freeing the central point for a knight.

38...♖f3 39.♖xa6 ♙e3

An attempt to muddy the waters, which Tigran simply ignores.

40.♠e4 ♙h6 41.♖xa7

Black resigned.

1-0

To mark the 25th anniversary of Aron Nimzowitsch's death, an international tournament was organized in Copenhagen, the city where that illustrious chessplayer had spent the last years of his life.

The Soviet Grandmasters who took part were victorious, but this was not achieved easily. They were given serious competition by the "old timer" Gideon Stahlberg. The decisive encounter proved to be Petrosian – Stahlberg in the penultimate round, in which the Swedish Grandmaster, doggedly playing to win, allowed an under-cover counter-attack and suffered defeat. In the end, Petrosian – the only player to come through without loss – scored 11½ points out of 13; Geller scored 10½, and Stahlberg 9½. The other participants were left far behind.

All through his life Petrosian felt special affection and esteem for Nimzowitsch, whose books, by Tigran's own admission, had played a key role in shaping his chess philosophy. It is therefore not surprising that when in 1979 the "Physical Culture and Sport" publishing house brought out a second edition of Nimzowitsch's famous *Chess Praxis*, the foreword to the book was written by none other than Petrosian:

When a book that first saw the light of day exactly half a century ago is re-issued in our

own time, isn't this an anachronism? Its author, Aron Nimzowitsch – one of the strongest chessplayers of the twentieth century – himself announced that this book was "intended to teach positional play".

In my view, training in positional play is equivalent to an education in chess overall.

It is held to be axiomatic that any player's tactical abilities emerge more quickly and conspicuously, and undergo self-improvement more readily, than the natural responsiveness to everything we define as positional aptitude. The gift for memorizing and then confidently handling all the cunning ploys of the pieces, their lightning-quick thrusts in attack or their sudden evasiveness in defence – this gift is susceptible of self-instruction. It may be asserted that tactics, in the first period of a chessplayer's development, progresses some way ahead of the other factors, and it is only after firmly mastering a complex of tactical devices that the player can set about studying the niceties of positional play.

This book can become your invaluable helper. When you study it – and I mean *study* it, and not just glance through it at the rate of so many pages and so many games per session – you are bound to detect some fluctuations of quality, and even some errors, in the variations, the recommended plans or the assessments. Do not let this trouble you.

Carried away by the prospect of bringing "his own" canon of chess laws to the awareness of the chessplaying reader, Nimzowitsch occasionally sins by taking his wish for reality and purveying it as such. But who knows? Perhaps this exuberance was just what inspired him to cast some rather boring positional truths in an aphoristic form, pleasant to assimilate and easy to memorize.

Chess Praxis is the book that I used to keep not so much on my table as "under my pillow", so to speak – a book of bedtime stories for the boy chess addict. And whenever I browse

through this book, it is like rediscovering those pronouncements of Nimzowitsch which once – as I now understand – laid the foundations of my chess philosophy.

“The aesthetic appreciation of a game of chess should be based on its inner content, not its outward form.”

“This preventive combination, which incorporates a six-move manoeuvre on the theme of pieces retracing their steps, shows how rich and varied the resources of prophylaxis are. I count it among my favourite combinations.”

“Of course, this interpretation of manoeuvres with the pieces is opposed to the meaning of the term “combination” that has taken root in our own time; to us, the essential ingredient of a combination is the sacrifice of material. And yet I feel that to narrow down the meaning of this term is to restrict our overall appreciation of beauty in chess.”

“A fretful concern for the absolute ‘correctness’ of moves and a timid avoidance of unusual paths, and in particular the horror of everything associated with a ‘colossal’ action (that is, one of vast proportions) – how vividly all this recalls the long vanished [*and newly revived* – *T.P.*] ‘pseudo-classical’ school!”

These and similar thoughts which Nimzowitsch addresses, so to speak, to chessplayers of a “poetic” disposition, are comparatively rare. Instructions to “scientifically” minded players are scattered more liberally throughout the pages of the book.

“Observation of the central squares is in all circumstances a strategic imperative.”

“An isolated pawn is not only a pawn weakness but a weakening of squares.”

“It only rarely happens that a freeing move disappears from the game for good. Much more often it will continue to exist as a threat.”

“The application of prophylaxis, restraint, centralization and over-protection must also be accorded paramount importance in the realm of defence. It makes a substantial difference whether the flank that is under fire is relying solely on its own resources or whether the whole board is radiating ‘defensive energy’. For what, in essence, is the meaning of centralization? Does it not mean that the entire board aspires to participate in the struggle, and that this aspiration is elevated into a principle?”

Here is the advice I give to anyone who sets himself the task of raising his class of play with the aid of this book. Compile for yourself a brief list of pronouncements by Nimzowitsch, like those I have just quoted; and then when analysing the games of other strong players, take a look at this list at frequent intervals. Then many moves, plans and ideas of the Grandmasters will become comprehensible. This in turn will widen your understanding of chess; put simply, it will make you stronger at the chessboard.

Admit you did not know that “two weaknesses, perfectly defensible in themselves, can be brought under fire alternately by an attacker who is relying on the territorial superiority he possesses, the superior state of his lines of communication. The game is lost because at some moment or other the defender proves unable to match his opponent in the speed with which he regroups his forces.” Or again: “Manoeuvring against a single weakness is also possible. In this case it is essential that a variety of attacking devices (for instance attacks from the front, side and rear) should make up for the lack of a multiplicity of weaknesses.”

That is Nimzowitsch for you!

GAME 57

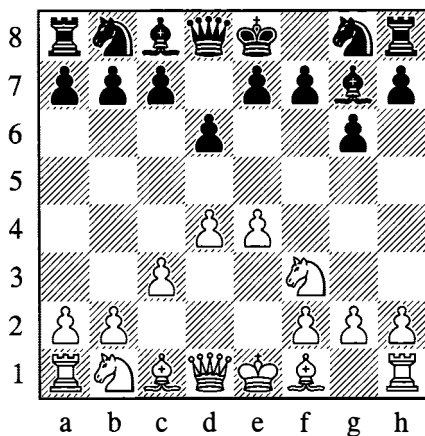
Tigran Petrosian – Johan Barendregt

Copenhagen 1960

1.d4 d6

Barendregt frequently employs an early fianchetto of the king's bishop, granting White temporary freedom of action in the centre. In this game, being familiar with the Dutch master's manner of play, I decided to restrict the sphere of activity of the bishop on g7 at a convenient opportunity.

2.♘f3 g6 3.e4 ♗g7 4.c3



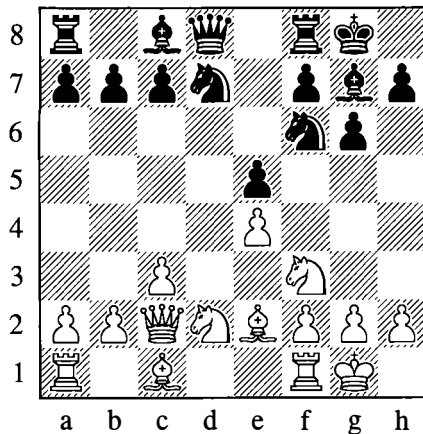
A useful move, supplying the foundation for White's central fortifications. Now no matter how Black tries to attack the centre, White will have a sufficient antidote, forcing his opponent to take up the middlegame fight in less favourable circumstances.

4...♘d7 5.♘bd2 e5 6.dxe5 dxe5

The pawn tension in the centre has vanished after only just arising. Perhaps from the point of view of "theoretical equality" Black ought to have taken on e5 with his knight and then recaptured with the bishop in the event of 7.♘xe5. But it wasn't for the sake of playing

for simplification that Black deviated from well-known opening schemes.

7.♗e2 ♘gf6 8.0-0 0-0 9.♖c2

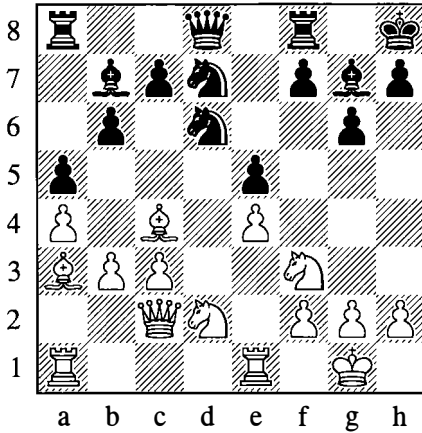


Only a few moves have been made, but already Black is having trouble devising a rational plan for mobilizing his forces. While White's strongest piece is conveniently stationed on c2, it isn't so simple for Black to find a good position for *his* queen. The e7-square isn't very comfortable in view of White's natural reaction of developing his bishop on a3. After ...c7-c6 Black could "hide" his queen on c7, but my opponent obviously didn't like this, owing to the weakening of the d6-point.

After a long think, Black decided to carry out a complicated plan that involved barring the d-file with a piece, developing his bishop on b7 and preparing to break with ...f7-f5. The further course of the game shows White refuting this plan.

9...b6 10.a4 ♗b7 11.♖e1 a5 12.♗c4 ♘e8 13.b3 ♘d6 14.♗a3 ♖h8

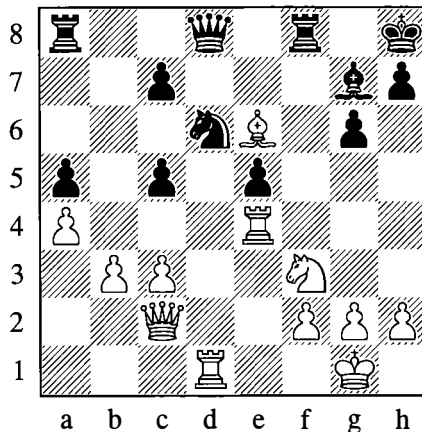
Black has achieved his aim: White is unable to prevent ...f7-f5. All the same, the aforementioned defect of Black's position – the unfortunate situation of his queen – has not been remedied. And this means that White is fully equipped to meet his opponent's "thrust".



15...♖ad1 f5 16.♙e6!

The pawn on e4 turns out to be indirectly protected. On 16...fxe4 White simply recaptures with his knight, seeing that 17.♟xe4 ♙xe4 18.♖xe4 ♟xe4 is hopeless for Black in view of 19.♖xd7. On the other hand, it isn't clear how White's threats of 17.exf5 and 17.♟c4 are to be painlessly parried.

16...fxe4 17.♟xe4 ♙xe4 18.♖xe4 ♟c5 19.♙xc5 bxc5



Black has managed to avoid material losses, but the positional damage is there. The abundance of "bad" pawns, the weakness of the light squares and the passive placing of his pieces make Black's defence very difficult.

20.♙d5

Before withdrawing his rook, White takes firm control of the e4-square. Obviously 20...♟xe4 will be met by 21.♙xe4 and 22.♙xa8, with an easily won position after 23.♟g5 or 23.♟d2.

20...♖b8 21.♖e3

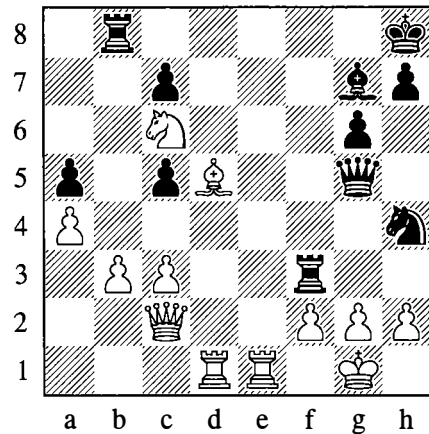
The correct square! White has to pay careful attention to a possible advance of the e-pawn, even if this means that the pawn is lost. For instance in the event of 21.♖e2 e4 22.♙xe4 ♖f6, Black would obtain distinct counter-chances.

21...♟f5 22.♖e1 ♟h4

With other continuations Black would still be unable to save the e5-pawn; the position of the knight on h4 gives him some sort of hope.

23.♟xe5 ♖g5 24.♟c6 ♖f3

This looks highly promising, but there is a simple refutation.



25.g3

After this it becomes clear that Black's position is lost. White has an extra pawn over and above the good placing of his pieces.

25...♖bf8 26.♖e4!

It's hard to find any area of the board that is

safe from strikes by the white pieces. White's centralized army easily liquidates Black's "attack".

26...♖f4 27.♗e3 ♗g4 28.♘e5 ♙xe5
29.♗xe5† ♖4f6 30.♖d3 ♘f5 31.♗xc7 ♘d6
32.f3 ♗f5 33.♖dd1 h5 34.♗xc5 h4 35.♗d4
hxg3 36.hxg3 g5 37.♙g2 g4 38.f4 ♙g7
39.♖e7† ♙g6 40.♖e5 ♗c2†

Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 58

Tigran Petrosian – Gideon Stahlberg

Copenhagen 1960

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♙g5 ♘bd7 4.c4

At this point I was sure that the game would be taken into the classic positions of the Orthodox Defence by 4...e6.

4...♘e4

An unconventional treatment of the position. Black tries to fight for the initiative.

5.♙h4

The simplest answer to 5.cxd5 is 5...♘b6.

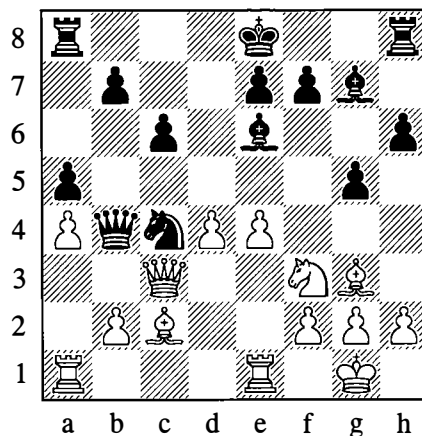
5...dxc4 6.♗c2 ♘d6 7.e4 ♘b6

The play has taken on an unusual character. The position of the bishop on h4 compels Black to develop own king's bishop with a fianchetto, so that some themes characteristic of the Grünfeld Defence make their appearance in the coming struggle.

8.♘bd2 c6 9.a4 a5 10.♘xc4 g6 11.♘xb6
♗xb6 12.♙d3 ♗b4† 13.♗c3 ♙g7 14.0-0
♙e6 15.♖fe1 h6 16.♙c2

Not a good move.

16...g5 17.♙g3 ♘c4



By now Black's pressure is palpable.

18.♖eb1

After 18.♖ab1 White would have to reckon with a possible exchange on c3 followed by ...♘a3. This is why he herds his rooks into the corner of the board, where they are very awkwardly placed.

18...♖d8! 19.h3 c5!

White's position is starting to come apart at the seams. At this stage I had to search seriously for ways to repel my opponent's pressure. One thing that strikes you is that because Black has not castled, he will be playing without his king's rook for a while if files should be opened up; and this is what secures White equal chances.

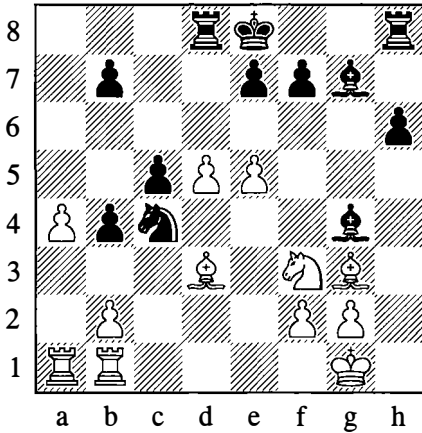
20.♗xb4 axb4

After the game, Stahlberg spoke disapprovingly of this move. To me it seemed that capturing with this pawn was obligatory, as 20...cxb4 would be answered by 21.♙b3 with advantage to White.

21.d5 ♙d7

White could reply in the same way to 21...♙c8.

22.e5 g4 23.hxg4 ♙xg4 24.♙d3



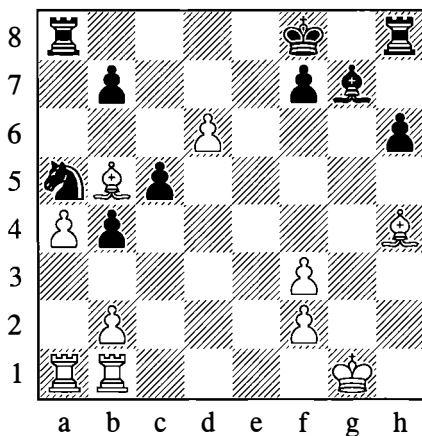
24...d5

The critical moment. After 24...xf3 25.xc4 xd5 26.c1, which seems indicated, White ought to achieve a draw. Stahlberg, however, decides to go all out for more concrete gains.

25.b5+ f8 26.d6!

It emerges that the threat of 27.dxe7 xe7 28.h4+ f6 29.exf6+, with 30.e1+ to follow, makes 26...b3 unplayable for Black.

26...xf3 27.gxf3 exd6 28.h4 a8 29.exd6



The d-pawn has taken revenge for being neglected earlier. The close-range fire of the

superbly posted bishops supports White's passed pawn while Black's forces lack cohesion.

29...e5 30.e7+ g7 31.h1 f5 32.d7 b6 33.f4 d4 34.h4 f6

White was threatening to penetrate with a rook to e7.

35.g1+ f7 36.xf6 xf6 37.a1 b3 38.d6+ e7 39.xb6 d4 40.c4 xd7 41.g7+ c8 42.a6+ d8 43.b7

Black resigned.

1-0

The autumn of 1960 saw intensive activity on the chess scene. The Soviet Team Championship, for teams representing the republics of the Union as well as the cities of Moscow and Leningrad, is an event that traditionally brings together practically all the strongest chessplayers of the country, and is conducted in an atmosphere of exceptionally keen competition. In that year it suffered from the fact that the top players of the favourite teams – Moscow (Smyslov, Petrosian) and Leningrad (Korchnoi) – were leaving for the Olympiad with two rounds to go. By the luck of the draw, these teams were due to face each other on the eve of the players' departure. The Leningraders were ahead in the Championship, and this was the Muscovites' last chance to narrow the gap. Their 6:4 win, to which Petrosian contributed by beating Taimanov, enabled them to do this, but no more. Moscow's loss of "manpower" enabled Leningrad to finish one point ahead of their rivals.

At the Olympiad in Leipzig, Petrosian was second reserve in the Soviet squad, just as he had been two years before. He brought his team 12 points from 13 games.

Chapter 7

1961-1962

The 28th Championship of the USSR opened a new cycle of contests in the struggle for the World Championship title – a cycle in which Petrosian was to be victorious.

In the words of Grandmaster Salo Flohr:

“Moscow’s Komsomol Square is the square of railway stations. But there is one building on this square that has been familiar to chessplayers for ages: the Railwaymen’s Central House of Culture. Here, under the direction of chief arbiter Viktor Goglidze, a magnificent chess spectacle is under way. Its twenty participants are dreaming of one thing – the Interzonal Tournament!

“The chess life of today’s Grandmasters is unenviable. Only three of them – Botvinnik, Smyslov and Keres – have a cushy time. Ever since 1948 this trio has constantly moved in the most exalted of chess circles, amongst World Championship Candidates, Champions and ex-Champions.

“This time, Smyslov is entering on a ‘new chess life’ – for the first time he has to qualify to play in the Interzonal. So far Tigran Petrosian has never once ‘made it’ into the World Championship circle, but he has never failed to make it to the elimination stage. Tigran is the most reliable ‘horse’ in this race. If you bear in mind that the ‘tiger’ qualifies for sure, automatically so to speak, then it is more accurate to say that only three players, not four, will be qualifying for the Interzonal from this Championship. One place is reserved for the ‘Spartak’ representative.”

However that might be, Petrosian succeeded in taking the top prize. Here is what the Soviet Champion himself had to say:

“For me, this year’s Championship marked a kind of jubilee. It was the tenth Final of the USSR Championship that I had taken part in. It was especially gratifying for me to gain the national title in a Zonal Tournament, where all the competitors were playing like ‘lions’ and ‘tigers’. It’s true that I couldn’t help getting some ‘scratches’ myself, but fortunately that happened in the first half of the contest. At the start of the tournament I was all worked up, and that was bound to be reflected in my play. My game with Simagin showed that nerves and careless adjournment analysis are poor assistants. In the second half of the Championship I managed to pull myself together and I played with redoubled energy and diligence.”

GAME 59

Tigran Petrosian – Vassily Smyslov

Moscow 1961

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.d4 ♙b7 5.a3

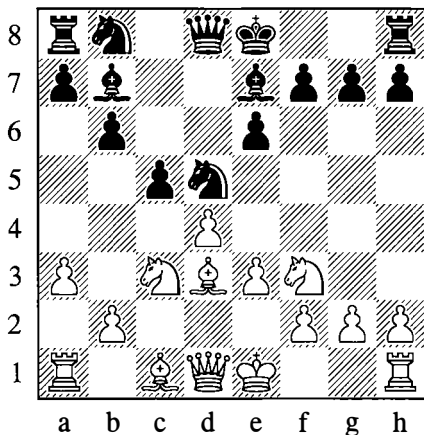
In the 22nd USSR Championship (1955), the opening had been played this way by Simagin. On that occasion Smyslov didn't find a convincing counter to White's intentions; he played 5...d6, then after 6...g6 he developed his bishop on g7, but he obtained a bad position.

5...d5 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.e3

The game has entered a channel that is characteristic of the line 1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♘f3 c5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e3. The difference is that this time the bishop has come out to b7 early, and this gives White the chance to make Black's development difficult by exploiting the temporary weakening of the a4-e8 diagonal.

7...♙e7 8.♙b5† c6 9.♙d3 c5

An interesting detail! If Black's pawn had been on c7, he would scarcely have made this move before finishing his development. But since, as a result of White's check on b5, the diagonal of the black queen's bishop is temporarily closed, Black makes haste to clear it.



10.♘d5 ♙xd5?

An inaccuracy. It was more advisable to play 10...exd5.

11.dxc5 ♙xc5?

Such perambulations with the queen don't, as a rule, go unpunished; 11...♙xc5, or even 11...bxc5, should have been preferred.

12.♙d2 ♘c6 13.♙c1 ♙d6 14.♙c2 ♙c8 15.0-0 h6

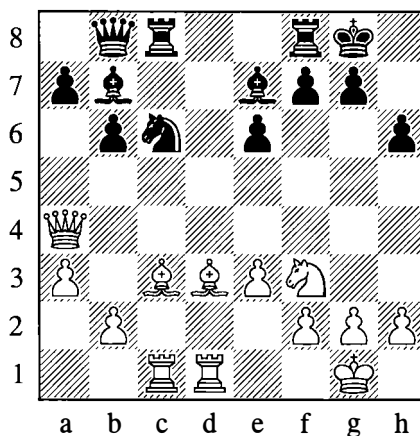
To ensure kingside castling, Black has to lose another tempo. But will his king's new refuge be comfortable?

16.♙fd1 0-0 17.♙c3 ♙b8

Whatever the case, it was worth giving preference to 17...♙c5, attempting to bring the queen to h5.

18.♙a4!

A simple move, but one possessing lethal power. Transferring the queen to the kingside enables White to launch an irresistible attack.



18...♙fd8

A number of annotators have suggested 18...g6 as best here. I looked at that move during the game, and would probably have answered it with 19.♙e4! (assuming of course that the search for direct attacking continuations, say

with 19.♖g4 or 19.h4, proved insufficiently convincing).

The continuation 19.♙e4 would retain the option of sacrificing on g6 followed by bringing the queen across to g4; White would break through to the 7th rank with a rook and achieve an overwhelming position.

19.♖e4 g6 20.♖g4 h5

The natural 20...♗h7 would lead to an immediate catastrophe: 21.♙xg6† fxg6 22.♖xe6 ♜f8 23.♙d7, and now if 23...♙c7 then 24.♜e5 is decisive, while 23...♙ce8 is met by 24.♜g5† hxg5 25.♖h3† ♗g8 26.♖h8† ♗f7 27.♖f6† and mate next move.

21.♖h3 f5

If 21...♙d6, then 22.g4 ♜cd8 (22...♙d5 is strongly answered by 23.♙xg6 and 24.gxh5) 23.gxh5 ♜xd3 24.♙xd3 ♜xd3 25.hxg6 fxg6 26.♖h8† ♗f7 27.♜e5†, and White wins.

22.♙c4 ♜xd1† 23.♙xd1 ♗f7 24.e4

Another way to continue the attack was 24.♙e1.

24...♖f4 25.♙e1! ♖g4 26.exf5 ♖xc4 27.fxg6† ♗e8

Or 27...♗xg6 28.♙xe6† ♗f7 29.♙xc6, and Black is crushed.

28.g7 e5 29.♖xh5† ♗d7 30.♙d1† ♙d6 31.♙xe5 ♜d4 32.♜d4

Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 60

Tigran Petrosian – Eduard Gufeld

Moscow 1961

1.c4 g6

This move order for reaching the King's

Indian Defence has been seen quite often in the tournament games of recent years. Black doesn't hurry to develop his knight to f6 but reserves the option of playing it to e7 or even h6.

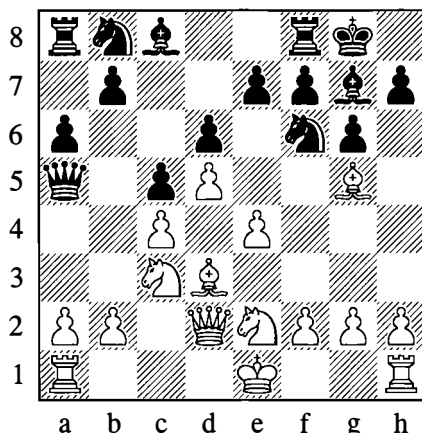
2.d4 ♙g7 3.♜c3 ♜f6

This time it merely comes down to a transposition.

4.e4 0-0 5.♙g5 d6 6.♖d2 c5 7.d5 ♖a5

In the event of 7...e6 8.dxe6 ♙xe6 or 8...fxe6, White obtains good chances on the kingside after ♙d3, ♜ge2 and 0-0.

8.♙d3 a6 9.♜ge2



Can Black now carry out the ...b7-b5 advance without suffering for it? The verdict on the opening stage of the present game depends on the correct answer to that question. Let us see: 9...b5 10.cxb5 axb5 11.♙xb5 ♜xe4 12.♜xe4 ♖xb5 13.♙xe7 ♜e8 14.♜xd6 ♖xb2 15.♖xb2 ♙xb2, and now either 16.♜xe8 ♙xa1 17.♜c1 or 16.♙b1 ♙xe7 17.♜xc8 ♙b7 18.♜d6 ♙b4 19.♜c4 would give a position with good drawing chances for Black. However, to be seeking salvation in an ending after just 30 minutes' play, without any further chances of complicating the struggle, is a prospect that few would find alluring.

A different approach is in keeping with the spirit of the position: instead of being intent on recapturing the pawn, Black continues after 9...b5 10.cxb5 with 10...♖bd7, which leads to a sharp struggle. As practice has shown, the opening of the a- and b-files, even at the cost of a pawn, gives Black quite good possibilities.

Gufeld's next move is a serious mistake.

9...e5?

Outwardly the position looks very promising for Black. By causing the central pawn chain to solidify, he has shifted the weight of the struggle onto the flanks. It looks as if the prospect of the undermining moves ...b7-b5 and ...f7-f5 gives him the more significant chances. However, if Black was reasoning in this way, laying stress on the dynamic quality of his pawn structure on the flanks, he ought to have remembered that the task assigned to the pawns is to clear a path for the pieces. He would not then have overlooked the fact that White's forces are much more effectively deployed for when the game opens up.

10.0-0 ♖bd7 11.a3 ♖h5 12.f3!

A good prophylactic move which is directed first and foremost against ...f7-f5. It emerges that 12...f5 13.exf5 gxf5 14.♖c2! is bad for Black, as no convenient way of defending the f5-pawn is to be seen. Of course, 12.♙e7 ♗e8 13.♙xd6 would be a mistake in view of 13...♖b6.

12...♙f6

The situation is very difficult for Black. He needs to cope with the positional threat of g2-g4 followed by ♖g3. If his knight, when attacked, should jump to f4, Black will be losing a pawn without sufficient compensation.

13.♙h6 ♖g7

From here the knight supports an advance of the f-pawn, but that also suits White's purposes.

14.g3

White's position is so good that he is able to vary his plans. For the moment, the double advance of the g-pawn is replaced by the more modest g2-g3, but Black now has to reckon with the possibility of f3-f4. In a situation where one opponent has no possibilities for organizing active counterplay while the other, possessing a significant spatial advantage, has several ways to improve his position, this manner of playing is sometimes more unpleasant and dangerous than any straightforward actions. The defending side has a hard time guessing the direction from which the danger will strike.

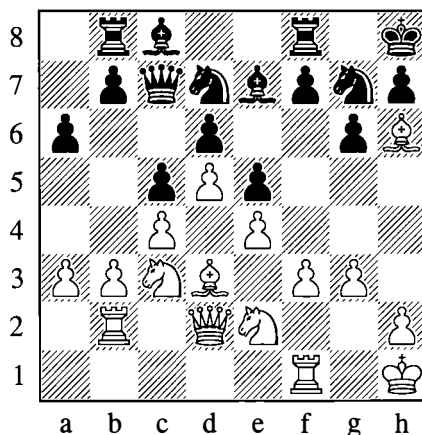
14...♖b8 15.♙h1 ♖c7

After 15...b5 16.cxb5 axb5 17.b4! it's easy to see that Black loses a pawn: 17...♖a6 18.♖xb5, or 17...cxb5 18.axb5, and now 18...♖xb4 fails to 19.♙e3 with the threat of 20.♖fb1.

16.b3

Still continuing with the same unhurried strategy. Before playing his pawn to b4, White prepares to double rooks on the b-file, which will be opened sooner or later. At the same time another problem is solved: there is no more need to watch out for the possibility of ...b7-b5.

16...♙e7 17.♖ab1 ♙h8 18.♖b2



18...♟f6

Black embarks on a new regrouping of his forces which eventually permits him to push his pawn to f5. If he had attempted that advance on this move or the previous one, then after exchanging on f5 White could have created unpleasant pressure on the b1-h7 diagonal with ♖c2. In conjunction with g3-g4 and the opening of a “second front” (after b3-b4), this would have placed Black in no easy situation.

Black’s most sensible course was to stick to passive tactics, waiting and sounding out White’s intentions. Moves such as 18...b6, to be followed by 19...♞b7, would in some measure increase his defensive resources.

19.b4 ♟g8 20.♙e3

It isn’t hard to see that by removing the knight from d7 Black has considerably exposed his queenside. White now achieves real positional gains with no trouble.

20...f5

After 20...b6 21.bxc5 bxc5 22.♞xb8 ♖xb8 23.♞b1, with 24.♞b2 to follow, White would seize the open b-file, but comparatively speaking this would be the lesser evil for Black.

21.bxc5 dxc5 22.♞f1

Black’s position is irreparably compromised. On the queenside White exerts powerful pressure along the b-file, while on the kingside, by carrying through the ...f7-f5 advance, Black has opened up additional gaps in his own fortifications.

22...♟f6

He shouldn’t have allowed the white rook in on b6. Of course 22...b6 would open up new possibilities for White, involving the advance of his a-pawn, but Black ought to have played that way all the same.

23.♞b6 ♙d6

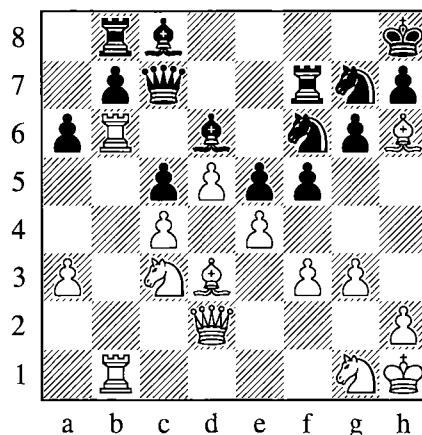
An attempt to expel the rook with 23...♟d7 would lead to material losses after 24.d6! and 25.♟d5.

24.♙h6

Despite White’s strong pressure, Black still retains hopes of obtaining counter-chances by exchanging on e4. If the f-pawn recaptures, this will allow Black to liquidate White’s dark-squared bishop by ...♟g4. If ♟e4 or ♙xe4 is played instead, then ...♟f5 becomes a possibility. It must be stated that given his overwhelming positional advantage, White would still be clearly better if these “threats” were carried out, but he has no reason to part with even an ounce of his positional gains without necessity.

24...♞f7

On 24...fxe4, I intended to continue with 25.♟xe4 ♟xe4 26.♙xe4 ♞f7 27.g4!, after which Black would be under fire from two directions as before: the queenside pressure would be combined with kingside play based on an advance of the white h-pawn.

25.♟g1**25...f4?**

After this, Black’s position collapses. Gufeld’s sangfroid as he contemplates White’s

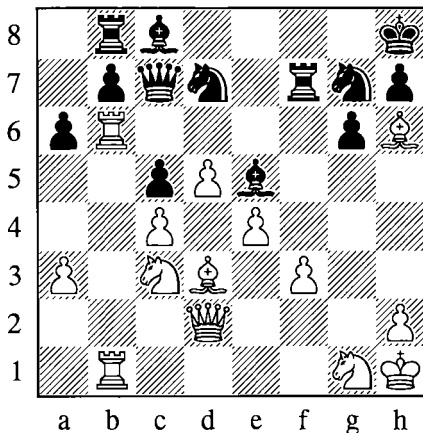
rook on b6 without flinching gives us reason to suppose that all along he has not considered his situation to be all that bad. Here, 25...♖d7 had to be played. Black could also preserve some fighting possibilities with 25...fxe4. In that case, the tempting 26.♗xe4 ♗f5 27.♗xd6 ♗xd6 28.g4 (or 28.♞b2 which, like 28.♞g5, would be met by 28...♙f5) 28...♗d7 29.♞b2 b5 would give Black what he wants – a sharper edge to the struggle, with chances for both sides. However, after 25...fxe4 26.♙xg7 ♗xg7 27.♗xe4 ♗xe4 28.♙xe4 White would keep a positional plus in a calm environment.

26.gxf4 ♗d7

Of course not 26...exf4 27.♞xd6, and White wins.

27.fxe5 ♙xe5

This is what Black has been counting on, seeing that 27...♗xb6 is clearly bad – White's position after 28.exd6 ♞xd6 29.e5 would be crushing.



If the white rook now retreats, Black plays 28...♗h5! and his pieces acquire convenient posts on d6, e5 and f4. If Black's plan could be realized, this would naturally cast doubt on the way White has conducted the middlegame, considering that Black had a bad position out of the opening.

28.♞e6!

Everything is in order! Black is denied the possibility of 28...♗h5, thanks to the threat of 29.♞e8†. At the same time, White has the bishop on e5 in his sights. This bishop is the sole obstacle in the way of the central passed pawns. After 28...♗f8 29.♞xe5!, eliminating this hindrance, White should win without trouble.

The concluding phase, with my young opponent in time trouble, is reminiscent of a game of "losing chess".

28...b5 29.cxb5 c4 30.♞c6 ♞d8 31.♙xc4 ♞h4 32.♞c1 ♗h5 33.♙g5 ♗g3† 34.♗g2 ♗xe4 35.♗xe4 ♞xh2† 36.♗f1 ♞xf3† 37.♗xf3 ♞h1† 38.♗f2

Black resigned.

1-0

The Soviet Championship was over. The Interzonal lay ahead. First, however, the future contestants in that event had the chance to try their strength in the prestigious tournament at Bled, organized on the initiative of Professor Vidmar.

Vidmar had taken part in the famous tournament of 1931 which included all the illustrious players of that time except Lasker and Capablanca. Alekhine came first by a margin of 5½ points over his nearest rival, thus establishing a record that has not been broken to this day.

The 1961 Bled tournament featured the past and present World Championship candidates Tal, Fischer, Keres, Petrosian and Gligoric. It was dominated by the rivalry between Tal and Fischer, who finished first and second respectively. Petrosian too delivered his traditional good performance, sharing 3rd-5th places with Keres and Gligoric.

GAME 61

Tigran Petrosian – Ludek Pachman

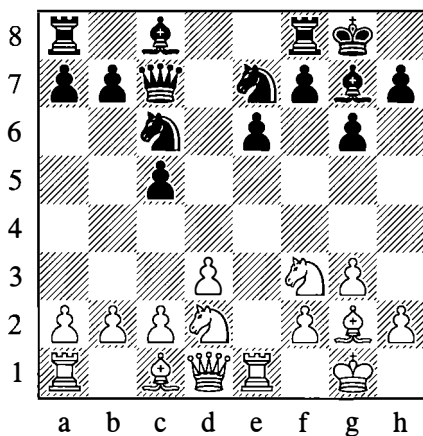
Bled 1961

1.♠f3 c5 2.g3 ♠c6 3.♙g2 g6 4.0-0 ♙g7
5.d3 e6 6.e4 ♠ge7 7.♞e1 0-0 8.e5

If White had continued with 8.♠bd2, then 8...d5 would have given a well-known position. It can never be a bad thing if you can set your opponent new problems at the start of the game.

I must add that the continuation chosen here had occurred in a game of mine before; this was Petrosian – Klavins from the 1957 USSR Team Championship.

8...d6 9.exd6 ♞xd6 10.♠bd2 ♞c7



The queen was badly placed on d6. White could have advantageously played ♠e4 or ♠c4 at a suitable moment. Black therefore withdraws the queen in advance. The plan that he started with 8...d6, directed at liquidating the white e5-pawn, must be judged a failure. Black ought to have been content with the modest 8...b6.

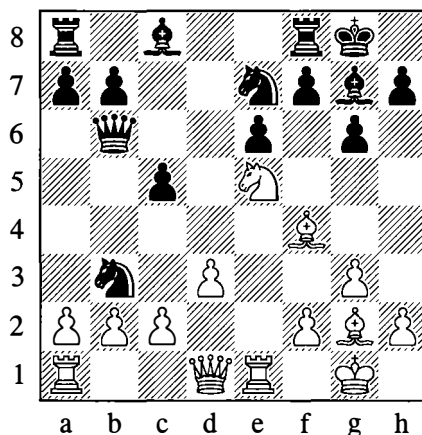
11.♠b3! ♠d4?

Another mistake. Black doesn't realize what troubles are looming. There was some improvement in 11...b6 12.♙f4 ♞b7; after that, there appears to be no way for White to extract concrete gains from the position – although, with his firm possession of the initiative, he exerts powerful pressure. Black would meet 13.♠e5 with 13...♙d7, while 13.d4 could be answered by either 13...c4 or 13...♞d8.

12.♙f4 ♞b6

After 12...♠xf3† 13.♞xf3 e5 14.♙e3, Black would lose the pawn on c5.

13.♠e5 ♠xb3



14.♠c4!

After this, the result of the game is basically decided. The idea of the move is clear: if White had played 14.axb3, then after 14...♠d5 15.♠c4 ♞c6 Black would have had every chance of defending. The intermediate move 14.♠c4 denies the black queen the option of going to c6.

14...♞b5

After 14...♞d8 15.axb3, faced with the threat of 16.♙d6 or 16.♞a5, Black would be unable to defend the unfortunate c5-pawn.

15.axb3 a5

How else is Black to defend against 16.♖a5?

16.♙d6 ♙f6

Another hopeless line is 16...♗e8 17.♙c7, with many threats.

17.♞f3 ♘g7 18.♗e4?

This move makes no difference to the fate of the game, as Black is not in a position to avoid material losses. All the same, it is a pity I didn't trouble to think just a little bit longer. Let me explain: it seemed to me that after 18.♞xf6† ♘xf6 19.♙e5† ♘g5, a rook would have been needed to complete the mating net by quietly moving to h4 and depriving the black king of the h6-square. So I quickly played 18.♗e4, but then I saw that ♗e4-h4 in my intended variation was no threat at all, as Black could reply ...h7-h5. Thereupon I immediately noticed ♙e5-g7.

18...♗d8 19.♞xf6† ♘xf6 20.♙e5† ♘g5 21.♙g7!

After this quiet move it isn't difficult to see that the king cannot escape mate. Black therefore resigned.

1-0

GAME 62

Tigran Petrosian – Miguel Najdorf

Bled 1961

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♙g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 e5 6.♘ge2 c6 7.♙g5

In the last few years the move ♙g5, with a pin on the black knight that might appear pointless, has become a popular feature of White's play in various lines of the King's Indian Defence. By pinning the knight, White makes it harder for Black to achieve ...f7-f5, the undermining move that is one of

his trumps. Perhaps at this point Black ought to play 7...exd4, followed 8...♞a5 or 8...♞b6. But Najdorf follows a different path.

7...♘bd7 8.d5 ♘b6

On 8...cxd5 White would recapture with 9.♘xd5; the point is that once his queen's knight has developed to d7, it isn't so simple for Black to direct one of his knights to d4 – while the weakness of his d6-pawn has become a substantial factor. Incidentally we should note that 9.cxd5 is also good for White.

The choice between these continuations is a matter of taste.

9.♘c1 cxd5 10.cxd5 0-0 11.a4

White commences operations on the queenside. It might seem a little early to be engaging in flank operations with the development of the kingside still incomplete and the king located in the centre, but in actual fact this plan is dictated by the current situation – seeing that Black is not in a position to exploit White's somewhat stunted development. The placing of the bishop on g5 plays an important role here, hampering the development of Black's kingside initiative.

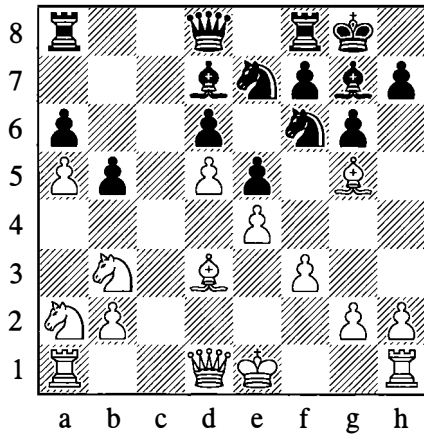
11...a6 12.♘b3 ♙d7 13.a5 ♘c8 14.♙d3 b5

Najdorf endeavours to stabilize the queenside pawn formation, making it harder for White to attack in this sector. The moment is well chosen, since in the event of 15.axb6 ♞xb6, with 16...♘h5 and ...f7-f5 to follow, Black obtains adequate counter-chances.

15.♘a2

White readjusts at once. With the black pawn on b7, the suitable squares for the white knights would have been c4 and a4. Now b4 becomes the base from which a knight will aim at the weaknesses in Black's position – the a6-pawn and the c6-square.

15...♘e7



16. ♖b4?

A major inaccuracy. The right move was 16.g4, which would considerably reduce Black's chances on the kingside.

16... ♖h5!

This is just the point!

17.g3

There was no need for this. It would be better to play 17.♖d2 and castle long, putting up with the black knight's invasion on f4.

17...f6 18.♗e3 f5 19.♖c1

By this time White is playing with fire, attempting to show that even in the centre his king is well off – which, to say the least, is over-optimistic. But then, indicating the right move for White is already no simple matter. For instance, 19.♖d2 is met by 19...fxe4 20.fxe4 ♗g4 21.♗e2 ♖d7 with dangerous threats. In particular, White cannot play 22.0–0–0 ♖fc8† 23.♙b1 ♗xe2 24.♖xe2 ♖c4!, when his position falls apart.

19... ♖e8 20.♖c7 ♖f6 21.♖d2 fxe4 22.fxe4 ♗h3 23.♗g5 ♖f7 24.♗xf6

Of course it was a pity to part with the dark-squared bishop, but this was necessary, as the knight on f6 was too troublesome a piece.

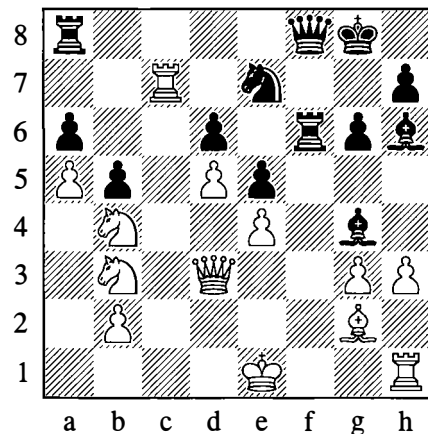
24... ♖xf6 25.♗f1 ♗g4 26.♗e2 ♗h3 27.♗f1 ♗g4

Black doesn't object to a draw. Although White's position is not at all superior, I decided to continue the struggle.

28. ♗g2 ♖f8 29.h3

If White could continue with 29.♖f1 here, all his foregoing play would be vindicated. However, the variation 29.♖f1 ♖xf1† 30.♗xf1 ♖f3 31.♖d3 ♖h1 32.♖xe7 ♖f8 33.♙d2 ♖g1!!, threatening mate on f2, would strikingly expose the whole rickety of White's set-up.

29... ♗h6 30.♖d3



30... ♗c8

Black sounds the retreat at the most inappropriate moment. A move that comes straight to mind is 30...♖f2. At first sight this may look like firing a blank, as White can play 31.♖f1 to exchange off the uninvited guest. That indeed was why Najdorf rejected the rook move. When the game was over, he was utterly astonished to discover that after 31...♖xg2 32.♖xf8† ♖xf8 33.hxg4 ♖g1† 34.♙e2 Black not only has the option of drawing by perpetual check but can carry on the attack with 34...♖gf1 (though actually this too would hardly yield anything other than perpetual check after 35.♖c2).

31.♖f1 ♗xf1† 32.♗xf1 ♖d8?

Rather more chances of defence could be preserved by 32...♗e3.

33.♖c3! ♗g7 34.♗f2

White has finally managed to rid himself of all the dangers, and now the penetration with his queen along the g1-a7 diagonal gives him a comfortable win.

34...h5 35.♗b6 ♖xb6 36.axb6 ♖b8

On 36...a5, White would play 37.♖xa5 ♖xa5 38.♖xc8† followed by 39.b7.

37.♖c7 ♗f8 38.♖a5 ♖xb6

It may look as if Black has evaded all dangers:

39.♖bc6 ♖xc6 40.♖xc6

Black resigned, as after 40...♗b7 41.♖a5 ♗a8 42.♖c8 ♗b7 43.♖b8 he would lose a piece. **1-0**

The 1962 Interzonal Tournament in Stockholm ended in victory for the nineteen-year-old Champion of the USA, Robert Fischer. He outdistanced his pursuers by 2½ points.

Characterizing the victor's play, Petrosian wrote: "Fischer's play made a good impression and his success was deserved. In the past two years the young American Grandmaster has noticeably changed. He has become a many-sided player with a leaning towards the positional game. What strikes you about Fischer is, if I may put it this way, his chess appetite. He always takes pleasure in playing. This, it seems to me, is one of the reasons for his successes..."

Geller, who shared second and third places with Petrosian, considered that "Petrosian was evidently not aiming for anything higher. He was peaceably disposed, and with that kind of inclination it's very difficult to win such a tournament."

For Petrosian the Interzonal Tournament

was a serious test on the road to the match for the World Championship. Alexander Kotov recounts:

"Already at the start of the contest Petrosian was complaining of tiredness which resulted from a bout of flu he had undergone, and he drew up his programme accordingly. He refrained from the demanding struggle for first place and played with one aim only – to finish in the top six. The talented Grandmaster proved more than equal to this task. Like Fischer, he went through the tournament without loss.

"It appears that the 'Petrosian problem' arouses strong feelings not only among our own chess enthusiasts. 'If Petrosian played a bit more boldly, he'd be the strongest player in the world' – it was Fischer who said that to me. That was the way Tigran had gained his successes in USSR Championships, which had brought him two gold medals. We can only hope that all his 'sitting tight' was done in Stockholm, and that in Curacao he will be a true chess 'tiger'."

GAME 63

Tigran Petrosian – Samuel Schweber

Stockholm 1962

Notes by G. Goldberg

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♖c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♗e2 0-0 6.♗g5

This system has brought Petrosian many an impressive victory.

6...h6 7.♗e3 e5 8.d5 c6

Schweber misses his chance to play 8...♖e8 in order to carry out the thematic 9...f5. Black will not get another such opportunity.

9.h4 cxd5 10.cxd5 ♖bd7

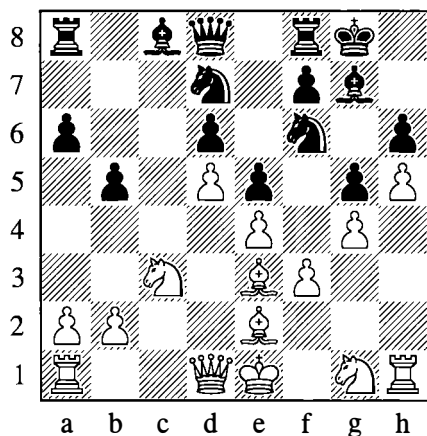
This looks timid, but it was already too late to try for ...f7-f5. If 10...♖e8 at this point, White gains an important tempo with 11.♗d2 and answers 11...♜h7 with 12.h5. Then 12...g5 is met by 13.g4, totally paralysing the black kingside; 12...f5 is also bad, as White wins a pawn by 13.hxg6† ♜xg6 14.exf5† ♚xf5 15.♙xh6.

11.h5 g5 12.f3 a6

Schweber has obviously realized that there is no longer any question of kingside activity by Black. But he cannot obtain counterplay on the queenside either, as all White's pieces have fixed their gaze on that very sector of the board. Black should therefore have gone over to defensive "trench warfare" and executed the manoeuvre ...♖e8, ...f7-f6, ...♞f7 and ...♙f8.

13.g4 b5

Black has failed to understand the present situation. After this move, he is probably no longer able to save the game. Of his own accord he has set up a target to be attacked, and Petrosian instructively demonstrates the hollowness of his opponent's plan.



14.a4! b4 15.♖b1 a5 16.♖d2 ♖c5 17.♙xc5!

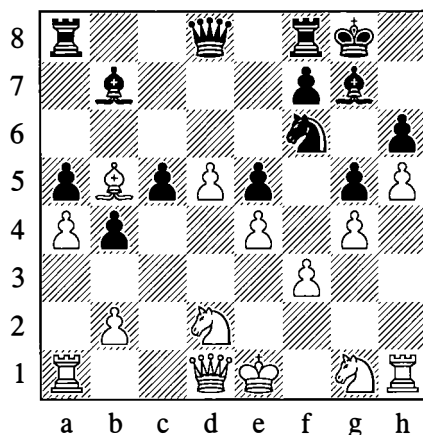
A brilliant move! Petrosian himself was very proud of this idea of exchanging his dark-

squared bishop for the knight that has shown up on the c5-square.

17...dxc5 18.♙b5!

Here the bishop is ideally placed. White is prepared to give it up in exchange for Black's other knight; then eventually one of the white knights will be left on c4 or f5, opposing the black dark-squared bishop. Such is the lucid strategy Petrosian is pursuing.

18...♙b7



In this situation Petrosian could organize an attack on the c5-pawn and even win it, but his opponent would then obtain a semblance of counterplay. White therefore rejects all temptations and rigorously implements his plan of "suffocation".

19.♖e2 ♖e8 20.♙xe8!

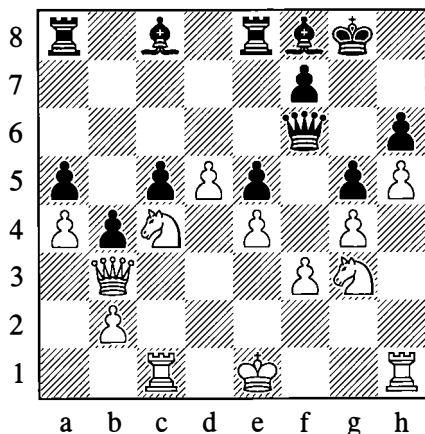
Clearly the knight mustn't be allowed to establish itself on the blockading square d6.

20...♞xe8 21.♖c4 ♙a6 22.♗b3 ♗f6

A simply incomprehensible move. Was Black perhaps counting on a blunder? But if White doesn't commit a gross error, what will the queen be doing on f6? The switch to stolid defence was long overdue, and to that end Black needed to play ...f7-f6 with ...♙f8 to follow.

23.♖c1 ♕f8 24.♜g3 ♖c8

The poor bishop heaves to and fro, not knowing which square to defend first – c4 or f5. If instead 24...♞f4, then 25.♙f2, whereupon 25...♖xc4 26.♖xc4 ♞d2† fails to 27.♜e2, as there is no defence against 28.♞d1.



25.0-0 ♞d8

Again a strange decision. The e5-pawn needs to be defended by the rook, as the queen will have to move away.

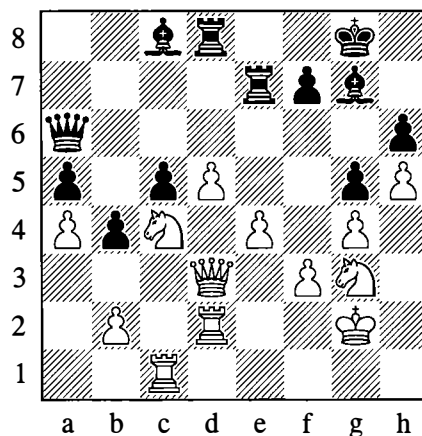
26.♙g2

White's composure is to be envied. There is no hurry, everything is going according to plan: first arrange the pieces on the most favourable squares, and then proceed to "reap the harvest".

26...♞a7 27.♞f2 ♙h7 28.♞fc2 ♞a6

Schweber is clearly tired of waiting while his doom slowly approaches, and he resolves on an extreme measure – giving up a pawn to obtain a breath of air, however slight, for his dark-squared bishop. Or perhaps he has forgotten that he has moved his rook away from e8, and is simply blundering the pawn away? Not that it greatly matters any more.

29.♜xe5 ♞c7 30.♜c4 ♖g7 31.♞d3 ♙g8 32.♞d2 ♞e7



33.e5

Now after multiple exchanges the game reduces to an easily won rook ending.

33...♖xe5 34.♜xe5 ♞xe5 35.♞xa6 ♖xa6 36.♞xc5 ♖c8 37.♞xa5 f5 38.gxf5 ♖xf5 39.♜xf5 ♞xf5 40.♞b5 ♞df8 41.d6 ♞xb5 42.axb5 ♙f7 43.d7

Black resigned. In a few moves' time he will run out of moves that are at all useful: 43...♞d8 44.b6 ♙e7 45.b7 b3 46.♙g3.

1-0

In one of his lectures, Petrosian stated that the art of positional play can best of all be learnt from the games of strong chessplayers against less experienced ones. The above game offers striking confirmation of this. His opponent's mistakes, imperceptible at first sight, were exploited by the Grandmaster with iron logic, giving a fine textbook example of the superiority of knights over bishops in a closed position.

And now at last it was the Candidates Tournament, the culmination of the three-year cycle of elimination contests. For the duration of two months at Curacao, the best of the best conducted a tense and gripping struggle.

There was a clash of different characters, styles and methods of play. The psychological depth and dramatic tension of the struggle accompanied the tournament to the end. At the start of the event, there were the traditional surprises; in the middle, the thrilling alternation of hopes and disappointments; and at the finish, the unrelenting contest of the three leaders. Who could have imagined that the favourites Tal and Fischer, after recently shining at Bled, would so easily forfeit the right to bid for first place?

Petrosian's supporters feared he might lose his spirit for the fight, as he had done in the previous Candidates Tournament. Yet he maintained an even pace, was not afraid of draws, and emerged as winner.

In an interview when the contest was over, Petrosian said:

"The tournament was exceedingly difficult. I can't remember any other competition that was so complicated. In many ways the unusual climatic conditions were to blame for this. When the thermometer was showing 28-29 degrees, it was considered to be a cool day. All of us participants grew terribly tired. And this took its toll especially in the fourth and last cycle. That's how I explain the not very impressive play in several of the games. I don't think I'll appear immodest if I say I was out to win this tournament. I'm sure I wasn't alone in that wish. Before he sets out, every contestant at heart wants the same thing. Well, fortune has smiled on me, and I won't hide the fact that I am happy."

Summing up the results of this marathon, Grandmaster Kotov assesses the play of the victor: "Tigran Petrosian has been competing in top-level tournaments for around a decade and a half. His outstanding talent is acknowledged even by those who don't entirely like the Moscow Grandmaster's way of playing. In the whole world you will scarcely find any other chessplayer whose successes follow such an

even 'curve'. I don't recall Petrosian finishing lower than third in any tournament in recent years. I dare say the adherents of sharp play, the lovers of attacks against the king and sudden tactical strokes, will not always find these elements in games by Petrosian. But the genuine chess connoisseur, amazed at Tigran's subtle manoeuvres, will admire his ability to exploit the most insignificant of advantages. His play is frequently compared to that of Capablanca. And often the comparison is just: Petrosian's technical mastery in many of his games does call to mind the unforgettable Cuban genius. At Curacao, Petrosian established an 'absolute' record. Throughout 28 rounds, facing the most select opponents, he didn't suffer a single defeat! This is not only a brilliant reflection of technical skill but also the result of excellent preparation, and of Petrosian's ability to apportion his forces over the whole distance and retain clarity of vision up to the end of the most gruelling contest. At Curacao, Tigran drew his four-game 'matches' with the other two leaders; against the remaining players, the matches were all won by him. Iron logic forged into a system!"

GAME 64

Robert James Fischer – Tigran Petrosian

Curacao 1962

Notes by I. Boleslavsky, I. Kan and A. Suetin

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗b4

A surprise – Petrosian had never played the double-edged MacCutcheon Variation before. Afterwards he admitted that he had prepared this surprise for Fischer at the Stockholm Interzonal, but decided to postpone the theoretical contest until the Candidates Tournament. We shall soon see how right Petrosian's "hunch" was.

Fischer is clearly unnerved by this choice of an unexpected opening. He steers clear of the critical lines and allows Black to reach a position that would give pleasure to any French Defence devotee. Consequently the theoretical importance of the game is somewhat reduced, but this at any rate does Petrosian no harm. [A.S.]

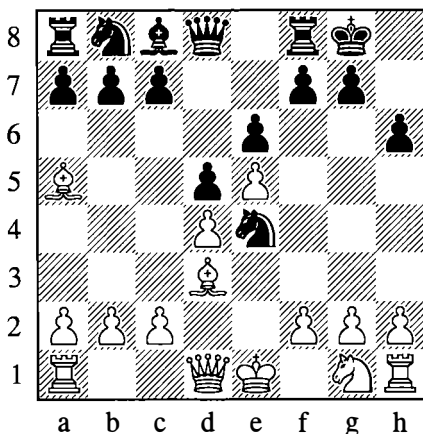
5.e5 h6 6.♘d2 ♟xc3 7.♟xc3

Undoubtedly 7.bxc3 ♘e4 8.♞g4! is both better and more thematic. Then Black's game in the main variation is anything but easy. Still, the line does lead to some very sharp positions that require special home analysis from the players, and Fischer was evidently not ready for this. [A.S.]

7...♘e4 8.♟a5!?

The idea of this paradoxical thrust belongs to Soviet Master Nikolai Kopaev. The point of the manoeuvre is that after the natural 8...b6 9.♟b4 c5 10.♟a3! cxd4 11.♞xd4 ♘c6 12.♟b5 White preserves his important dark-squared bishop while blocking the black queen's exit to a5. [A.S.]

8...0-0 9.♟d3



9...♘c6! 10.♟c3

It must be acknowledged that the bishop's

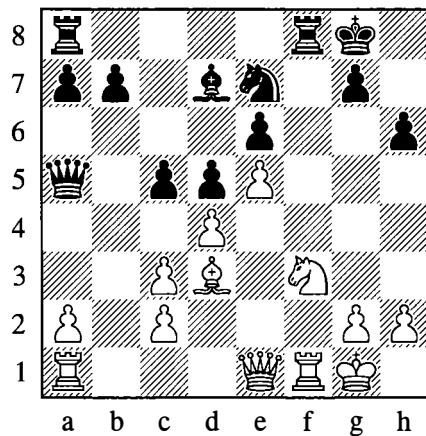
manoeuvre to a5 has held up the natural development of White's pieces. [I.K.]

10...♘xc3 11.bxc3 f6! 12.f4 ♟e5 13.♟e5 ♘e7

The knight makes way for the c-pawn. Black would gain nothing from 13...♞g5 14.♞e2, followed by 15.♘f3 and 0-0. [I.K.]

14.♘f3 c5 15.0-0 ♞a5 16.♞e1 ♟d7

Black threatens to increase the pressure on his opponent's weakened pawns. Apart from ...♞ac8, White has to reckon with the possibility of ...♟a4 (with ...c5-c4 to follow). With this in mind, Fischer takes the decision to exchange queens and try to create some counter-chances after eliminating the threats just mentioned. [I.K.]



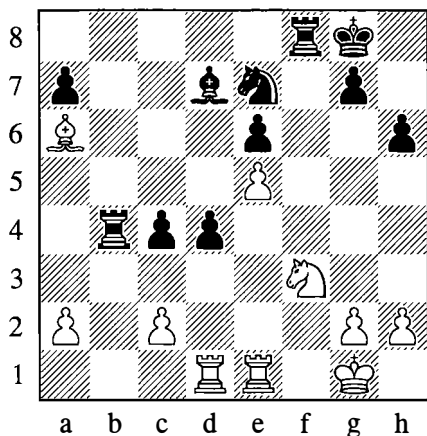
17.c4?

Fischer isn't fond of defending passively and attempts to clear the air, but this merely leads to the creation of new weaknesses; 17.♖h1 was to be preferred. [I.B.]

17...♞xe1 18.♞fxe1 dxc4 19.♟e4

In the event of 19.♟xc4 White didn't like 19...b5 20.♟f1 c4, but that would have been better than what happens in the game. [I.B.]

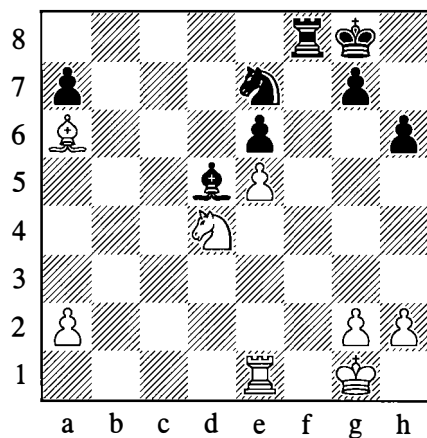
19...cxd4 20.♟xb7 ♞ab8 21.♟a6 ♞b4 22.♞ad1

**22...d3!**

Of course 22...♖a4 would be worse in view of 23.♙xd4!, when White seizes the initiative. [A.S.]

23.cxd3 cxd3 24.♙xd3 ♙c6

Threatening to win a piece with 25...♙a4. With his next move White exchanges off the active black rook. [I.B.]

25.♙d4 ♙xd4 26.♙xd4 ♙d5**27.a4?**

After this move, White loses a pawn. Petrosian suggested 27.♙f1! as best, giving White realistic chances to save the game. Indeed 27...♙xa2 could be met by 28.♙a1 followed by 29.♙xa7; meanwhile, White would

be threatening various active manoeuvres: for example ♙b1 or ♙b5. It's difficult to show how Black could turn his advantage to account in these circumstances.

27...♙f4 28.♙d1 ♙g6 29.♙c8 ♙f7 30.a5 ♙xe5 31.a6

This, it now turns out, was Fischer's idea. For the second time in the game, his striving for active defence has let him down; the hope he places in the strength of his a6-pawn and the weakness of Black's a7-pawn is not justified. [I.B.]

31...♙g4 32.♙d2

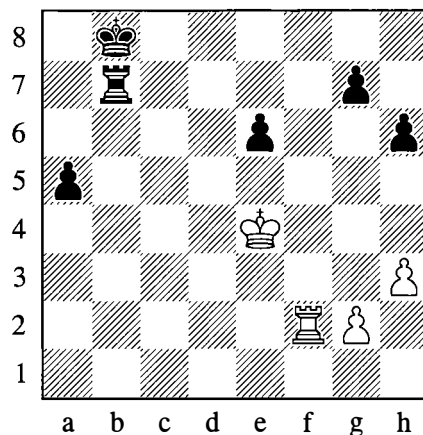
Not 32.g3?? on account of 32...♙xd4.

32...♙c4 33.♙f2+ ♙e7 34.♙b5 ♙d6 35.♙xd6

After 35.♙xa7 ♙c4 36.♙b7 ♙xb7 37.axb7 ♙xb7 Black would have every chance of winning, thanks to his extra pawn and powerful bishop. But the technical task would no doubt be more complicated than in the game continuation, in which he shortly wins a second pawn.

35...♙xd6 36.♙b7 ♙xb7 37.axb7 ♙c7 38.h3 ♙g5 39.♙b2 ♙b8 40.♙f2 ♙d5 41.♙e3 ♙d7 42.♙e4 ♙xb7 43.♙f2 a5

The sealed move.



Fischer resigned the game without playing on.

The adjourned position is not without interest. Thus if White plays 44.♖e5 and Black continues with 44...a4 45.♞f8† ♕a7, then after 46.♞f4 ♞b5† 47.♕d6! ♞a5 48.♕c6 ♞a6† 49.♕c7 White achieves a draw. The correct answer to 44.♖e5 is 44...♞a7!. Then after 45.♕d6 (45.♕xe6 a4 is hopeless for White) 45...a4 46.♕c6 ♞c7† 47.♕b6 ♞b7† 48.♕a6 a3 49.♞f8† ♕c7 50.♞f7† ♕c6 51.♞xb7 a2, Black wins. [I.B.]

0-1

GAME 65

Tigran Petrosian – Mikhail Tal

Curacao 1962

Notes by Y. Averbakh

1.c4 ♖f6 2.g3 c6 3.♖f3 d5 4.b3 ♖f5

This system of defence was adopted in the famous game Reti – Lasker, New York 1924. To counteract White's pressure with pieces against the central squares, Black fortifies his pawn on d5. A complex struggle arises with chances for both sides.

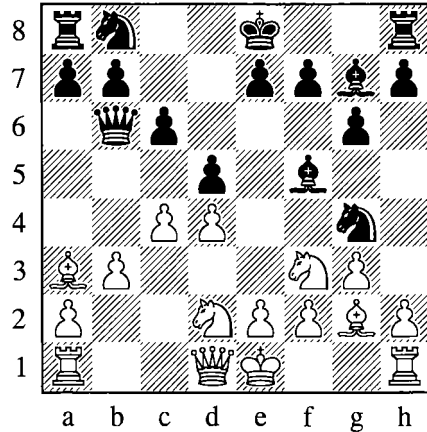
5.♖a3

Usually 5.♖g2 is played. Now after 5...e6 White intends to exchange on f8. Then Black's only bishop will be the "bad" one. He therefore opts for the plan of developing the king's bishop on g7.

5...g6 6.d3 ♖g7 7.♖bd2 ♞b6

Typical Tal! He prepares to play 8...♖g4 with complications. The more natural move was 7...0-0.

8.♖g2 ♖g4 9.d4!



9...♖a6

After 9...♖xd4 10 ♖xd4 ♞xd4 11.0-0 White has various possibilities, for example: 11...dxc4 (if 11...♖a6, then 12.♞c1) 12.♖xc4 (alternatively 12.♞c1 c3 13.♖f3 ♞f6 14.♖b4 c2 15.♞d2) ♞xd1 13.♞fxd1, with the threat of 14.♖a5.

10.0-0 ♖b4

Threatening 11...♖c2. Although the role of cavalry has been reduced to a minimum in twentieth-century warfare, this move was essential. Otherwise Black would have great difficulty castling.

11.♖b2

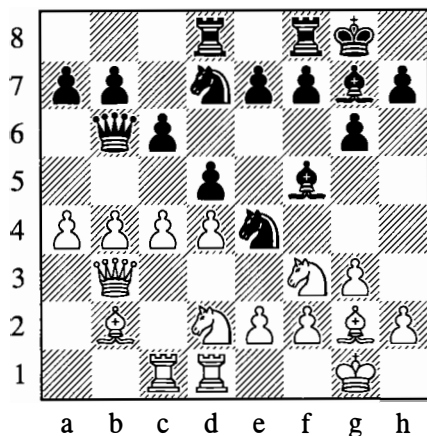
Well played. Black will now have to spend several tempi regrouping his pieces.

11...0-0

He should have preferred 11...a5 12.a3 ♖a6. Now White stands better on both wings.

Black would lose with 11...♖c2 12.♞c1 ♖xd4? 13.c5 ♖xf3† 14.exf3. Next move, the knight's raid on c2 would still fail, for the same reason.

12.a3 ♖a6 13.♞c1 ♞ad8 14.b4 ♖b8 15.♞b3 ♖f6 16.a4 ♖e4 17.♞fd1 ♖d7



At last Black has deployed his pieces in their best positions. But it is too late; White is ready for a determined offensive, and he now sets his plan in motion.

18.cxd5 cxd5 19.a5 ♖d6 20.b5 ♜xd2 21.♞xd2 ♞c8

Tal doesn't like exchanging pieces. But there is nothing for it – in the present case it is imperative to reduce White's pressure.

22.♞h4 ♞xc1† 23.♙xc1 ♞c7 24.♞xf5 gxf5

Of course not 24...♞xc1†, as after 25.♞d1 Black loses his pawn on d5 (25...♞g5 26.♞xg7 ♞xg7 27.♞xd5).

25.♙a3

White could play 25.♞c2 ♞xa5 26.♞xd5, with great complications in which he has good chances. But he prefers a position that is clear, and this gives Black the possibility of somehow organizing a defence.

25...♞xa5 26.♞b4 ♞b6 27.♙xd5 e6 28.♙f3 ♞c8 29.♞a4 ♞c7 30.♙g2

These last few moves are characteristic of Petrosian. He conducts the fight in a manner that guarantees him total safety, even though playing for complications might have been the quickest way to the goal.

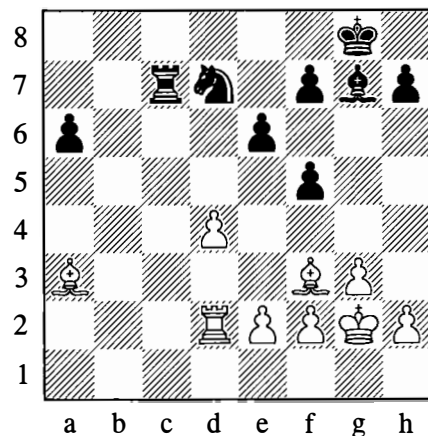
30...a6

A more stubborn defence was 30...♙f8.

31.bxa6 ♞xa6

If 31...bxa6 then 32.♞b2, after which 32...♞xd4 can be answered by 33.♞b8†.

32.♞xa6 bxa6



The ending is favourable to White. He has the two bishops and the better pawn formation.

33.e3 a5 34.♞a2 ♞a7 35.♙b4 a4 36.♙c6 ♙f8 37.♙f8 ♞xf8 38.♞xa4

White's positional advantage has been converted into a material one – an extra pawn.

38...♞c7

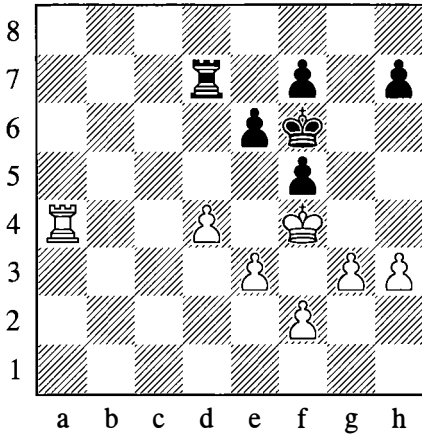
Would exchanging rooks have been better? This is unclear. The white king would then infiltrate the black position via f4.

39.♙xd7

White doesn't want to give the black rook the chance to seize the second rank. In addition, the knight coming via f6 to e4 or g4 would have been unpleasant.

39...♞xd7 40.♙f3 ♙g7 41.♙f4 ♙f6

Here the game was adjourned.

42.h3**42...h5?**

A mistake. White's plan was as follows: exchange the g-pawn for Black's f5-pawn, then obtain a passed pawn by advancing with e3-e4 and d4-d5. This task would have been far from easy. After 42...h5? the victory is a good deal simpler to achieve. The best tactics for Black consisted of waiting without altering his pawn structure.

43.♖a8 ♜b7 44.♜g8 ♜b2 45.♔f3 ♜d2 46.h4

Now Black loses the h-pawn.

46...♔e7

Black had planned this when pushing his pawn to h5. He is counting on depriving the white rook of mobility.

47.♜g5 ♔f8 48.♜xh5 ♔g7 49.♜g5† ♔h7 50.h5

Fischer indicated a different winning line: 50.g4 f6 51.♜h5† ♔g6 52.gxf5† ♔xh5 53.fxe6. This is further proof that 42...h5 was wrong.

50...♖a2 51.g4 ♔h6 52.♜g8 ♔h7 53.♜e8 fxg4† 54.♔g3 ♔h6 55.♜e7 ♔g7 56.♜c7 ♜b2 57.♜c5 ♔f6 58.d5 ♔g5 59.h6 exd5 60.♜xd5† ♔g6 61.♜d6† ♔g5

If 61...f6, then 62.h7 ♜b8 63.♜d7 and wins.

62.h7 ♜b8 63.♜d1 ♜h8 64.♜h1

In this lost position, Black exceeded the time limit.

1-0

Chapter 8

1963

Undoubtedly 1963 was a star year for Petrosian, and not merely on account of his victory in the match with Botvinnik. This victory signalled an end to the era in which the first Soviet World Champion had dominated. Henceforth a change of champions seemed the normal consequence of the passage of time.

Much was written about the World Championship match between Botvinnik and Petrosian, both immediately afterwards and later on. It is all the more surprising that the following article by Petrosian remained stored away in his archives for many years, to be published only in the first edition of this book (Moscow, 1985: “Physical Culture and Sport” publishing house). Tigran Vartanovich is all there, with his modesty and absence of vanity.

* * *

I didn’t think or guess that one day I would be playing a match for the Championship of the World, and least of all did I suppose that my opponent would be Mikhail Botvinnik. It seemed to me, as it did to many other chessplayers, that Botvinnik would succeed in repulsing the attempts of all Grandmasters to wrest the chess crown from him – whether they were opponents he had already confronted in the pre-war years, or players who came to the fore after the war.

It was probably in 1951 that the most formidable danger lay in wait for him – something that the chess fans were fairly quick to forget. This was when Botvinnik, who three years earlier had crowned his long chess journey with a resounding *fortissimo*, faced David Bronstein on the stage of the Chaikovsky Concert Hall. It is hard to overrate the significance of this clash. For the first time, Soviet chessplayers were witnessing a duel between Botvinnik and a rival who was on a par with him. In the very first game, Bronstein sprang a surprise on the whole of the chess world. The Dutch Defence had served Botvinnik truly and faithfully for many a year, and Bronstein’s decision to fight the World Champion with the latter’s own favourite weapon was very bold, both in pure chess terms and from the psychological viewpoint. Alongside his creative ideas for determining the character of the match, Bronstein committed a number of errors. He made little use of the King’s Indian Defence, and – a key point – he only started doing so at a late stage. This is understandable; Botvinnik is sure to have been well prepared for that opening. But the King’s Indian must be counted among those openings where success cannot be guaranteed by analytical work alone, without ample practical experience to consolidate your skills in playing the “standard” positions. In King’s Indian structures, the positional struggle rests on tactical nuances.

Positions with characteristic endgame features were treated rather carelessly by Bronstein. Suffice it to recall his missed chance in game 18, which cost him half a point.

We could only guess how hard it was for both opponents. The entire match was an equal struggle; neither of them ever succeeded in gaining a lead of more than one point over the other. Two titans had collided on a narrow path, and neither was able to push the other aside – 12:12. But the implacable laws of FIDE state that an undefeated Champion remains Champion.

1954. Everyone was in dismay. After four games of the Botvinnik – Smyslov match, the score was 3½:½ in the Champion's favour. Naturally such a wide gap forced Smyslov to undertake some risky tactics. He selected some complicated and sharp variations with Black. A sensible decision. But was this, if you please, characteristic of Smyslov? Where had his composure, his imperturbability and coolness, gone? Where was his painstakingly studied and approved opening repertoire, producing his well-known fireproof positions against which his opponent's onslaught was apt to be shattered? Of course, it isn't so easy to opt for simple and well investigated schemes when your opponent is in the lead. If he wants, he can steer the events in a direction that makes playing for a win very hard. Yes, the situation was difficult for Smyslov, and it must be acknowledged that his striving for a double-edged struggle was the right way to continue a match that had started so unfortunately.

With an abrupt turn of the helm, the next phase of the match brought a great sensation. After the 11th game Smyslov was already ahead, with six points to five! At this stage perhaps, as though pausing on an intermediate peak, he should have contemplated the route he had travelled and made some amendments to his plan. But when something is working, you don't want to alter it, do you? Up to the end of the match Smyslov endeavoured to sow the wind, and he reaped the whirlwind.

Final score – 12:12. Neither victor nor vanquished. Just like Bronstein three years before, Smyslov had not yielded to Botvinnik in anything, but he had not shown superiority either. The chess crown continued to adorn the head of Botvinnik, or it would be more precise to say that Botvinnik adorned the chess crown.

1956. Holland. The Candidates Tournament. The extremely tense tournament struggle brought success once again to Smyslov, after a dramatic incident in the penultimate round: Paul Keres, the only contestant who was still in contention with Smyslov for first place, missed a winning chance when two moves short of the time control, and was left a piece down.

His self-assured victory in his second match with Botvinnik in 1957 made Smyslov the seventh World Champion in the history of the game. The balance of forces within the global chess elite appeared to leave no doubt that the chess world had obtained a leader who could continue at the head of the players and their thinking for many years to come. But there was one reservation, namely the defeated Champion's right to a return match. It is true that this match, which the rules prescribe but which essentially is an additional barrier in the challenger's path, is highly dubious in its justice and logic. Judge for yourselves: you perform successfully in contests on various levels and win the Candidates Tournament which formally establishes your right to fight for the World Championship title, you defeat the World Champion, and then... just one year later, you face the former Champion again. Isn't that rather a lot? We can hardly agree with Botvinnik's well-known argument that the complicated multi-stage system of elimination contests culminating in the title match may give the chess world a Champion who got there by good fortune. That would mean that the entire system which aims at producing a worthy challenger was at fault.

The law is the law, and in 1958 the return match for the title of World Champion took place. We can only guess at the reasons for Smyslov's collapse. Botvinnik's objectivity and his ability to perform a correct diagnosis of chess ailments (his own and, no doubt more importantly, those of his opponent) may be considered exemplary; and more than once, after the comparatively rare setbacks in his illustrious chess career, these qualities have quickly enabled him to correct the impression made by his temporary slump. Yet while giving Botvinnik his due, we could not overlook the fact that this was not the usual Smyslov playing. What was the matter?

Three years later a similar scenario was to be repeated. Many people were dumbfounded. Could this really be Tal playing? Tal, who had instantly become the idol of most lovers of chess, as if by the wave of a magic wand? Tal, whose play, whose style, could not leave anyone at all indifferent, whether they liked it or viewed it with aversion? It seems to me that the basic misfortune of both Smyslov and Tal, in the periods preceding the return matches, lay in what might be called moral disarmament. After victories that left no shadow of doubt that they were rightfully gained, both these Champions felt that the requirement to try their strength once again against Botvinnik was a vexing illogicality. They formed the impression that the return match would repeat what had gone before; forgetting how much effort the previous match had cost them, they wanted to win the new one without much loss of blood, so to speak. They both suffered a cruel disappointment.

* * *

I spent a good deal of time in anguished thought. It was essential to acquire an understanding of everything that had occurred in World Championship matches. The point, essentially, is that I was going to have to perform in an unaccustomed role – that of match contender. Theoretically, it is easy to pontificate on the differences between tournaments and matches. It is easy to give advice, or to explain to the chess fans just what competitive tactics had to be adopted by this or that contestant in a World Championship match.

Time passed. Those of my friends and supporters who came to see me at home in the late summer and early autumn of 1962 were perplexed. Where were the obvious signs of intensive preparation for the Championship match? Where were the chess pieces set up and ready for battle, where were the mountains of books and the stacks of magazines and bulletins? Wasn't the pulse-rate of the preparations rather feeble?

At the time of course it was difficult for me to explain to them all just how complicated my situation was. I had gained the right to do battle with Botvinnik. But it was well known that during an appearance at the Polytechnic Museum after his victory in the return match against Tal, the World Champion had let it be known that if Soviet players should come top in the following Candidates Tournament, he might decline to defend his title. According to the rules of the International Chess Federation, the arrangements for the match would have to be ratified by the FIDE President not later than four months before the starting date. Considering that matches in Moscow generally began in mid-March, Botvinnik could think about his right to defend the World Championship title for quite a long time. There were indications that the USSR Chess Federation was preparing for what would happen if he did *not* defend it. This could explain the hurriedly organized match between Grandmasters Keres and Geller, who had finished 2nd-3rd in the Candidates. That match was to decide who should be accorded second place – which conferred the right to participate in the *next* Candidates Tournament, but also, most importantly,

it would make the winner a contestant in the World Championship match if Botvinnik stood down.

Time passed, the uncertainty continued. Both Botvinnik and I had time to go as members of the Soviet team to Bulgaria, where the health resort of Golden Sands witnessed a new victory for the Soviet players – in the 15th Chess Olympiad.

After I arrived back in Moscow, some more time elapsed before I received an official letter from the USSR Chess Federation – which announced that a meeting concerning the World Championship match between Botvinnik and me was scheduled for 10 November. The letter arrived on the last Saturday of October 1962.

I cannot say that the choice of date was the pleasantest possible from my viewpoint. It so happened that I would have to miss a regular medical examination. And without the doctor's report, it would be at least incautious to assent to the terms for the World Championship match. But these considerations, strangely enough, were ignored by the Federation's governing body, which insisted I should be present at the meeting. After this first meeting on 10 November, another one, in the presence of Y. Mashin [*Chairman of the USSR Sport Committee – Ed.*], was scheduled for the 14th.

By that day I had received notice that I was due to undergo surgery to eliminate the causes of repeated severe angina attacks. A question arose about a possible infringement of the FIDE match regulations. The regulations state: "The match for the World Championship shall be played in favourable climatic conditions." I could not agree to the proposed date (14 March) for the start of the match. In the first place this is a damp time of year, when in my case the probability of angina trouble is especially high. Secondly, my operation would fall within the four-month interval between the two key dates: the date when the agreement between the players was signed, and the date when the match was due to begin. Obviously this interval is prescribed as a minimum, to ensure that the players can devote themselves wholly to their preparations.

My own proposed starting date, 1 April, was objected to by Botvinnik, who pointed out, not unreasonably, that in that case the end of the match would fall in June, when it could be hot in Moscow. This was no less just than my own observation that the second half of March in Moscow is rather a cold and damp time to be playing a World Championship match. Eventually, having failed to agree on a start date between themselves, the contestants made use of their right to appeal to Folke Rogard, the President of FIDE, in the case of a dispute. After a short wait, Rogard's truly Solomon-like decision was received: disagreeing with the dates proposed by the players, he declared that the match would begin on 23 March.

I learnt of all this in hospital, where, in the last ten days of November, doctor Demidov handled a difficult case of an operation which is not generally very complicated. This was the same doctor Demidov who in 1958 had performed on me a so-called resection of the nasal septum, enabling me to endure the tension of fierce chess battles. This time too, he did an excellent job. On coming out of hospital I immediately contacted Isaak Boleslavsky, who was to be my second, in order to discuss our preparation for the match. After consulting with him I decided to take on IM Alexey Suetin, who had offered his services, as an assistant for the period of pre-match training. In the initial period of preparation I was also helped by Grandmaster Simagin.

Readers need to know that according to FIDE rules, only one player – the officially designated second – is entitled to help a contestant with the analysis of unfinished games. Anticipating a little, I may say that Boleslavsky handled this task splendidly.

For our work we needed to select a location that would at the same time provide opportunities for sport. Naturally, somewhere in the area round Moscow would best suit this purpose. At a distance of 30 kilometres from Moscow there is the “Sukhanovo” rest home of the Architects’ Union. That is where I have more than once prepared for major competitions, and I have to say that every time, after “Sukhanovo”, success has come my way.

On this occasion I didn’t want to spend all the time up until the match in the warm and friendly surroundings of the rest home, so I decided to prepare in a different place and only spend the month immediately before the match at “Sukhanovo”. I felt this to be the right thing, as you can eventually tire of even the pleasantest surroundings or company.

The flag of our headquarters for preparation was hoisted at the “Litvinovo” sanatorium, also not far from Moscow. Days filled with work began.

How were we to go about the technical chess aspect of our preparation? On this point there was no need for discussion. In the first place we had to assemble a precise, clear profile of the present-day Botvinnik. It was a very important and difficult issue. The difficulty lay in detaching ourselves from all the impressions, sometimes fairly superficial ones, that were voiced by other players. These impressions had accumulated gradually, and like a concave mirror they reflected one thing: all his life Botvinnik has suffered from the malady that is called a weakness of combinative vision. On the other hand, Botvinnik’s skill in the realm of chess strategy and endgame play is so great that only a fool would decide to fight him on his own territory.

There is no chessplayer in the world who has not studied games from World Championship matches. I was no exception. However, the interest I took had been not only the interest of a player but also the curiosity of a journalist, who had several times commented on Championship matches for the press. In 1957 I was invited to cover the Botvinnik – Smyslov match for the journal *Soviet Sport*.

The game would end around 9.30-10 in the evening, and it would have to be on the editor’s desk, ready for publication, by 11-12 the following morning. Within a few days it became obvious to me that if I was to elucidate the course of events on the chessboard properly, and figure out the schemes of the players in their conditions of limited thinking time, there was one essential requirement: I would need to be in the press centre during all the hours of play. The press centre at a World Championship match presents a curious spectacle. It is 5 in the evening. The match arbiter has just started the chess clock. On the big electronic clocks erected at the back of the stage, the second hand has started moving. The auditorium is half empty. In a while it will be crammed full; that will be when the events on the board have entered their critical stage. After all, “quality” Championship games are not supposed to be decided in the opening.

It is quiet in the press centre. The assistants can carry out the moves on two tables and on the demonstration board unhindered. Only a few people are discussing the opening phase out loud. The minutes on the chess clocks race ahead, the pulse of life in the press centre quickens. By now, correspondents on all levels are present: from Grandmasters known the world over, considering themselves the masters of the press centre as of right – their opinions, of course, are listened to with special attention – to ordinary columnists. Passions are coming to the boil. The most interesting things are going on on these boards. It might seem that the position in the actual game has nothing at all to do with the possibilities unearthed in the press centre.

Suddenly someone comes out with “What if... such-and-such?” Interesting! That board draws the people to it like a magnet. They make some more moves, they argue, they discuss; working

themselves into the role, the supporters of White or Black lavish their imagination, calculation and clairvoyance on the position. Never mind that the moves carried out are sometimes not the strongest; never mind if now and again you discover that in the heat of the analysis someone has contrived to make two moves running for the same side; never mind that nothing of this sort will be seen by the spectators sitting in the hall. In the heated atmosphere of the press centre, experienced chessplayers can still put together a picture of how the game is going; they can see not only what has happened, but also the things that might have happened which are sometimes more important. They have so little time. The demonstration board operator comes running in with the news that the game has been adjourned. Information has to be relayed to the newspapers, radio and television as efficiently as possible. Time is not standing still.

At four previous World Championship matches I had sat in the press room all through the playing session. I had tried to be at the centre of the chess storm, pursuing one aim only – to interpret all the vicissitudes on the chessboard as faithfully as I could. After all, it is precisely from us Grandmasters that readers want to learn the truth. But at the time I had no inkling that during those very hours I was attending an excellent school of preparation for a Championship match of my own. Admittedly, it is one thing to look on from the side and hold forth about chess styles and about this or that contestant's merits as a player; it is one thing to make assertions in the press centre, whether modestly or imperiously, about the players' real or imagined mistakes (a mistake of your own is not dangerous – and as we know, there are just as many opinions as there are chessplayers). And it is quite a different thing to have to draw specific conclusions, on the basis of which your own plan for preparation must be formulated. Any mistake *then* is fraught with grave consequences. Here are some curious facts. The first time I had played against masters in a tournament was in 1944. From that time on, I had taken part in very many contests and faced a variety of opponents. I had played in miniature tournaments where one loss or even a draw at the outset can make your chances of ultimate success problematic. I had played in tournaments of mixed composition, in which players who are frankly weak appear side by side with World Championship candidates. And I had played in Candidates Tournaments, which in foreign parts have justly been called monstrosities. It might seem that there was no form of chess contest that I had not experienced.

And yet somehow my chess life had been lived in such a way that one very interesting form of contest – matches – had rarely featured in it. In all my fairly lengthy chess practice, I had played three matches in total. In 1946 I had beaten Genrikh Kasparian by 8 points to 6 in a match for the Championship of Armenia. My second match, as wisecrackers put it, ended with a level 7:7 score. In actual fact I had won seven games and drawn seven. That was in 1951, when I played the role of examiner in a match for the master title against candidate master M. Mukhitdinov. These duels, especially the first one, had left a certain trace in my chess development, but much water had since passed under the bridges, and I only retained a very vague impression of the specific character of match play. As for my encounter with Simagin in 1956 in the match for the Moscow Championship, this was of such short duration (a mere 5 games) that it didn't give me the feeling I had played a match at all.

This meant that on the basis of analysing Botvinnik's games and studying how his struggles had gone, I needed to form at least an approximate picture of the coming duel.

Every time I have heard or read that Botvinnik the tactician is much inferior to Botvinnik the

strategist, a feeling of protest has spoken out inside me. There are no chessplayers who never make mistakes. In Botvinnik's play like anyone else's, tactical oversights have occurred. Rumour in the chess world has lent them gigantic proportions. Sometimes, after all, you do so want to see defects where there are none; you want to be convinced that your idol too is not immaculate, that your idol too has weaknesses; and in such cases it is not long before your wish is being proclaimed as reality. Botvinnik is known for his self-criticism, and more than once he has mentioned this very issue. Notably, in his book *World Championship: The Return Match Botvinnik vs. Smyslov 1958*, he himself drew attention a few times to his mistakes of a tactical nature. For example: "Here once again, my old 'ailment' – a weakness of combinative vision – took effect."

Very well, then. The organic defect of Botvinnik's play is clear. We can draw up a "plan of campaign". We need to select sharp opening formations and strive from the very first moves to create a situation full of mutual tactical dangers. And we will take it from there. It is in the nature of things that Botvinnik will go wrong by reason of his old ailment, isn't it? And then we can overcome him "with our bare hands". An enticing prospect, to be sure.

"Hold on," the voice of reason speaks up again. "We've heard of Botvinnik as the creator of brilliant tactical displays against Rauzer and Alekhine, against Vidmar and Capablanca, haven't we?"

"That was long ago, in the pre-war years when Botvinnik was young, at an age when a player's tactical abilities are on the up and up."

"I'm not convinced! A player who feels unsure of himself in complications cannot be the author of such a complex system as the 'Botvinnik Variation' in the Queen's Gambit. In that line, everything rests on an unconventional appraisal of the position, an appraisal based on nothing other than the sober perception and long-range calculation of the tactical peculiarities."

No. Focusing attention on Botvinnik's tactical errors would just be skimming the surface. I had to clear my mind of everything extraneous that could hide the truth under a thick layer of muddled and specious judgements. I thought long and hard about the forthcoming duel. Whether I was listening to music – without putting a book down, out of old habit – or taking a walk in Moscow; whether I was in Armenia amongst the circle of my friends and comrades, or watching a football match – all the while I would be thinking about my match with Botvinnik. I shared my thoughts and doubts with Boleslavsky. I told him that in my view I ought to play against Botvinnik in my usual way – not seeking complications at any price, but not shirking them if my opponent threw down the challenge and the circumstances suggested that the possibilities open to me were favourable. I shouldn't be confused by the prospect of simplification. If I got into a difficult position, I shouldn't lose heart. Boleslavsky basically agreed with me, only he stressed that it was extremely important to give special attention to the problem of the opening. For like no one else perhaps, Botvinnik knew how to build up his game painstakingly on a solid positional foundation, and loved to do so.

I myself have always suffered from a somewhat "slovenly" handling of the opening phase, and as a result I have quite often entered the middlegame with the worse position. True, it is apt here to recall the saying that every cloud has a silver lining. This shortcoming of mine has taught me patience, it has given me a taste for playing in adverse circumstances; over the course of years it has become clear to me that so-called inferior positions conceal immense possibilities – you just need the ability to discover them and make use of them. Nevertheless, considering that Botvinnik was a past master at punishing an opponent for inaccuracies committed in the opening, my faults

in the build-up of the game would have to be eliminated, to some extent at least, in the course of our preparation.

So the question of an opening repertoire arose. In the practice of strong players, the opening occupies a special place. Everyone has his own favourite opening schemes, which as a rule lead to the type of middlegame positions that particularly suit him.

With White, the matter was more or less clear. There was no point in renouncing closed games. Opening with the king's pawn should be kept in reserve and only employed to create a particular psychological impact. Things were more complicated when Boleslavsky and I were pondering how to play with Black. We reckoned that Botvinnik would not do any experimenting with White, so the problems of the closed openings would need to be solved from the Black side. "What to play with Black" was the chief problem we were working on while staying at the "Litvinovo". A number of opening systems would have to be prepared, so that if one of them should be put out of action, the next one could be brought in.

At this point a word about our match tactics is appropriate. A curious picture emerged when we began studying the graphs of progressive scores in Botvinnik's matches.

1954: Botvinnik – Smyslov. Final score, 12:12. Score after 4 games, $3\frac{1}{2}:1\frac{1}{2}$ to Botvinnik.

1957: Botvinnik – Smyslov. Final score, $9\frac{1}{2}:12\frac{1}{2}$. Score after 4 games, 2:2.

1958: Botvinnik – Smyslov, return match. Final score, $12\frac{1}{2}:10\frac{1}{2}$. Score after 4 games, $3\frac{1}{2}:1\frac{1}{2}$ to Botvinnik.

1960: Botvinnik – Tal. Final score, $8\frac{1}{2}:12\frac{1}{2}$. Score after 4 games, $2\frac{1}{2}:1\frac{1}{2}$ to Tal.

1961: Botvinnik – Tal, return match. Final score, 13:8. Score after 4 games, $2\frac{1}{2}:1\frac{1}{2}$ to Botvinnik.

The striking fact is that in all the matches where the outcome was favourable to Botvinnik, he had succeeded in snatching the lead right at the very start. This is to say that in a contest between evenly matched opponents, a more or less significant lead in points is very difficult to eliminate. Lost points weigh heavily on a contestant's shoulders and nervous system, prompting him to take risks – even though the full danger of such tactics is obvious. Here is what Botvinnik himself has written on the subject: "The three-point advantage gave me a major trump that I didn't think to utilize straight away – it gave me the possibility to stick to cautious tactics, which is a great advantage in the struggle between two equal opponents in a match. Generally speaking, I applied these match tactics to the very end, in the conviction that they would widen the margin still further – for a moment was likely to come when my opponent would start to get worked up and would lose patience..."

To me, the second part of Botvinnik's utterance was especially important and characteristic: "my opponent would start to get worked up and would lose patience..."

The simplest thing, you might suppose, would be to give him a taste of his own medicine – to grab the lead myself, or at any rate try to. But it was hard to count on this, since Botvinnik, like no one else, has the ability to arrive for the start of a contest in the maximum state of readiness for combat, and he plays at full strength, as they say, from the very first moves. I myself, on the other hand, usually take a certain while to get into my stride. For the start of the match, therefore, I had to give special attention to "questions of security", since I am not one of those players who play with redoubled energy on the day after a defeat. I cannot say that a loss has an overpowering effect on me, but as a rule I conduct the next game placidly, concerning myself least of all with

immediate revenge. It was especially important to take this fact into account in the forthcoming match, considering Botvinnik's great punching power in general, and at the start (I repeat) in particular. Our opening preparation therefore proceeded on two parallel lines:

- (1) We endeavoured to discover and analyse new paths in the closed openings; this was to cater for a quiet type of contest without a great difference in the scores.
- (2) In case my opponent should succeed in seizing and maintaining the lead, we had to have schemes in readiness that would lead to double-edged play notwithstanding the attendant risk, in order to alter the character of the struggle radically.

Such, I would say, was the complex of questions that we discussed and worked on during our sessions together.

Nor did I forget about the need for physical fitness. I had lived in Moscow since 1949, but in all that time I had never got round to providing myself with a really warm overcoat. I had often looked with amazement at the born-and-bred Muscovites, who in winter time would pull massive wadded or fur-lined concoctions of high-class material over their shoulders. But the need to spend more time in the open air induced me too to acquire a fur coat which proved to be just the right thing, since this time, in contrast to some other years, there was a genuine full-blown Russian winter in January and February in the Moscow region.

The skill of Petrosian the skier noticeably increased. Although I had gone skiing before from time to time, it was only during this winter that skis became inseparable from me. Timid and hesitant at first, I began to feel more relaxed as I acquired the skills and experience. I skied all round the environs of the rest home. The endless descents and ascents were especially difficult for me. Many of them preserved the imprint of my back. Slowly but surely I mastered the technique for the downhill slopes. True, I avoided any particularly steep descents, fearing a possible injury. When the skiing season was coming to a close, I was already in love with this splendid form of sport.

About three weeks before the match I put my chess activities aside. Skiing, billiards, books, evening strolls and conversations round the blazing hearth – with these things I shaped up for the match struggle.

The match was announced by posters in the Moscow streets, special articles in the newspapers, and – a particularly important point – a sharp increase in the quantity of letters to my address.

March 20th: the match arbiters Stahlberg and Golombek arrived, as did the FIDE representative, ex-World Champion Euwe. The final organizational questions were settled, and the drawing of lots took place in Stahlberg's room in the "Metropol" hotel. The following day saw the formal opening ceremony in the Estrada Theatre, which together with the Central Chess Club was to accommodate the contestants and all the chess fans for the duration of the match.

On 23 March at 16:30 hours, the clock was started. The match was under way.

The white pawn in Stahlberg's clenched hand had fallen to my lot. Consequently I was playing the first match game with the white pieces. I won't conceal the fact that I was pleased with this whim of chess fortune, which has never graced me with all that many favours. I realized that a certain amount of time on the stage would be needed to acclimatize myself. There is a big difference – a *very* big one – between the atmosphere of the tournaments I was used to playing

in and the ambience in which I would now have to exert myself. Picture a stage with eight to ten tables and a large line-up of contestants, with whom from time to time you can unburden yourself in friendly talk. Not all controllers are always well disposed towards this way of passing the time; they view the players as potential cheats out to obtain or give advice. I personally don't believe there is any "offence" in such conversation, and always take pleasure in seeing a pair of players pacing up and down between the tables and chatting between themselves. What don't they talk about! How many spectators are there in the hall? Do you like the tie that Master X is wearing? A piece of breaking news of great importance and urgency has to be shared with your comrade: "In Milan versus Santos, the score is 4:2. In Spartak against Moscow Army Central, it's 1:1..."

Of course, they cannot help discussing events on the chessboard either. "Grandmaster Y slipped up in the opening, and now his position isn't too good. It looks as if Master Z could have won a pawn two moves ago with ♘g4 (it'll be interesting to ask him afterwards why he didn't do it)."

This is all quite good relaxation in conditions of intense mental effort. But now, I was going to be all on my own on the stage, right the way through the match. You don't usually talk to either your opponent or the arbiters, do you? It wasn't going to be easy to spend five hours of play under the vigilant gaze of the massed devotees.

"All right then," I said to myself before the first game. "I'll play as quiet a game as I can, and I won't have any objection to a draw. There's a long way to go, plenty of 'blood' will get spilt later, and the most bloodthirsty of the fans will be satisfied."

* * *

In 1982, the magazine *64 – Chess Review* published the reminiscences of the Moscow University Professor Kovalyov, a passionate lover of chess. Here Kovalyov recounted his conversation with Boleslavsky which had taken place in the Estrada Theatre on the day of the first Petrosian – Botvinnik match game. The opinion voiced by Boleslavsky on that occasion may seem all too subjective, but then it isn't an accident that they say no one knows a sportsman's character as his coach does.

"No one has more respect for his opponent as a player than Petrosian has. Suppose he's facing a player that he stands head and shoulders above. He'll still conduct the game just as if his opponent knew about all the hidden possibilities of the position that Tigran sees on his behalf. So Petrosian will take measures against possible actions on his opponent's part that would never have entered his opponent's head. He will be playing *for* his opponent, so to speak. In his own imagination Petrosian endows his opponent with uncommon perspicacity.

"Against a run-of-the-mill player Petrosian plays just as he would against Fischer, while understanding perfectly well of course that the opponent in front of him is just 'one among many' and *not* Fischer. Petrosian always plays against a perfect opponent. He is like Leo Tolstoy! Not in the sense of non-resistance to evil. In *that* respect Petrosian, the man from the Caucasus mountains, is like the tolstoyan hero Hadji Murad who fought tenaciously to the end. Petrosian resembles Tolstoy in a different way. Tolstoy discovers something good in any human being... Tolstoy believes in people; Petrosian believes in the powers of any of his opponents. *Any* of them!"

GAME 66

Tigran Petrosian – Mikhail Botvinnik

Moscow (5) 1963

For every chessplayer there are certain games that particularly stick in the memory. One such encounter, for me, was the 5th game of this match – and not only because it was my first win against Botvinnik in any official contest. In this duel, an opening experiment which contradicted the assessments of the theoretical manuals was tried out and was crowned with success.

1.c4 g6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♙c3 d5 4.♙f3 ♗g7 5.e3 0–0 6.♗e2

This modest move in the Grünfeld Defence has a poor reputation. In openings handbooks, the game Sokolsky – Botvinnik, Leningrad 1938, is cited as a model demonstration of Black's correct plan, with which he obtains an excellent position.

Yet in this case, the fundamental weakness of a common type of opening monograph comes to light. The authors are not seeking any new paths in the variations they are examining. They don't give attention to that transfer of strategic ideas from one system to another which is characteristic of our time. Instead they confer an abundance of exclamation and question marks in unhesitating approbation of pieces of play extracted from past games – sometimes games from a very *distant* past. On the basis of such "analysis", they draw categorical conclusions about the worth of this or that continuation.

The 6.♗e2 variation is frowned on by theory on account of the system with 6...e6, which was adopted by Botvinnik in the game just mentioned.

Since that time, many years have passed. New ideas in the Grünfeld Defence have been

put forward; continuations in keeping with the most varied chess tastes have been worked out. Vladimir Makogonov, for example, devised a system with 6.b4, in which White tries to prevent the traditional break with ...c7-c5. However, practice and theoretical investigations were to demonstrate that this scheme for White has serious drawbacks: his development lags, and weaknesses arise on the long diagonal. With 6...♙e4 or 6...b6 Black obtains a good game.

In the period of preparation for the match I gave a good deal of attention to the Grünfeld, reckoning that it was bound to occur in the course of our contest. One day this thought occurred to me: after 6.♗e2 and the reply 6...e6 which strikes me as quite passive, how about steering the game into the channels of the Makogonov system?

After detailed consultation, my coach and I came to the conclusion that this was a worthwhile plan. Our judgement was in fact borne out by a game played during the match, namely Simagin – Osmanagic, Sarajevo 1963, in which White acquired good prospects.

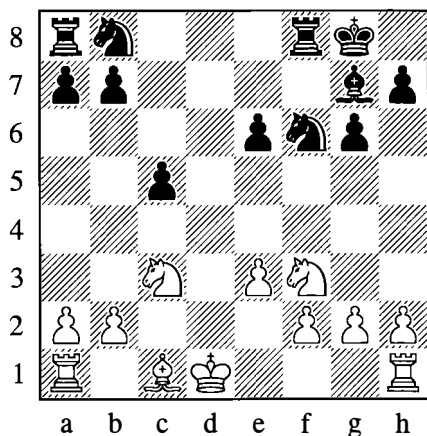
6...dxc4 7.♗xc4 c5 8.d5 e6

If Black wanted to obtain a complex position, he could have played 7...♙fd7 – on the lines of the Smyslov Variation in the Queen's Gambit Accepted – or else 8...♙e8, with ...♙d6 to follow. I think that a little later Botvinnik would have chosen one or other of these lines. But at the time when this game was played, he would go in for simplification readily, especially with Black.

9.dxe6

White cannot persist in maintaining his pawn on d5. After 9.e4 exd5 10.exd5, Black has the unpleasant 10...♗e8†.

9...♗x1† 10.♙x1 ♗xe6 11.♗xe6 fxe6



According to reports, the most impatient among those who frequented the press centre had started packing up to go. The magic pieces (the queens), you see, had come off, and what sort of a game can there be without them? And yet the ending that has come about is highly complex. Of course it is hard to point to any distinct advantages in position for either of the players. Very likely, if this ending had arisen in any other game, it would have concluded peacefully.

But it seems to me that a great deal depends on your mood. If the desire to fight is there, the position is full of life. If you *don't* want to fight, then any position of the sharpest kind can very quickly be made anaemic.

Frankly speaking, in my heart of hearts I wasn't very happy with the rapid simplification of the position. But it couldn't be helped. Your opponent has notions of his own, and you have to come to terms with them.

And there is something else I would add. According to a story in the press, I had already said at home that I was "going to win this ending". That story, to put it mildly, does not correspond to the facts. If I had said such a thing, it would have been, to say the least, immodest; it would have betrayed excessive optimism in the assessment of my position, as well as underestimation of my opponent. There could be none of that at this stage in

the match. I had simply said to Boleslavsky – while we were analysing the whole variation – that the prospect of arriving at this ending should not put me off the system with 6.♕e2.

How then *should* the position be evaluated? White's pawns make the more favourable impression, primarily because Black has one on e6 that has split off from its peers. Of course it is hard to imagine that White will at some moment create a serious threat to win this pawn. But the organic defect of an isolated pawn lies not only in the fact that it may become an object of attack. Just as importantly, the square or squares in front of it may serve as outposts for the opponent's pieces. It is these considerations that give us cause to view White's position a little more sympathetically.

12.♕e2 ♖c6

If the knights are taken off the board, it is fairly easy to conclude that White's hopes of attaining a plus will dissolve. A knight is the very piece that is going to occupy an ideal post on e4. For that reason, annotators recommended 12...♖d5 13.♖e4 ♖d7 for Black – although even so, 14.♖fg5 or 14.♖d1 would leave some initiative in White's hands.

13.♖d1 ♖ad8

One of the slight inaccuracies that my opponent commits in this game; 13...♖f7 was simpler.

14.♖xd8 ♖xd8 15.♖g5 ♖e8

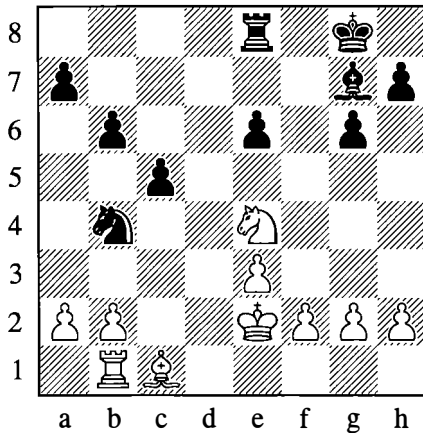
The presence of bishops on the board is another thing that has to be taken into account. In the event of 15...e5 the bishop on g7 would become, if not a "bad" one, then at any rate an "indifferent" one.

16.♖ge4 ♖xe4

He should have preferred an immediate 16...b6. Then after 17.♖xf6† ♖xf6 18.♖e4

Black would have the choice of withdrawing his bishop to g7 or e7.

17. ♖xe4 b6 18. ♜b1 ♜b4



19. ♙d2

White could also play 19.a4; the result would probably be the same as what happened in the game.

19... ♜d5

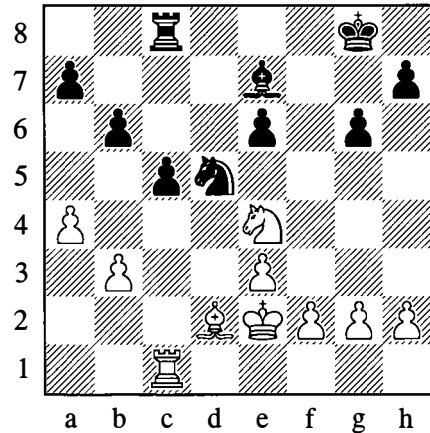
It's obvious that the variation 19... ♜xa2 20. ♜a1 ♜b4 21. ♙xb4 cxb4 22. ♜xa7 ♙xb2 23. ♜b7 would suit White, notwithstanding the limited amount of material remaining on the board. He would retain some chances of success while Black would be condemned to prolonged defence.

20.a4 ♜c8 21.b3 ♙f8

In this last stage of the struggle the players have been making moves that were necessary and for that very reason not bad. It seems to me that over this stretch of time White has achieved more than Black. White has completed the mobilization of his forces and improved his queenside pawn formation. Black for his part has finally decided that the place for his bishop is on the a3-f8 diagonal.

22. ♜c1 ♙e7

The annotators were unanimous in condemning this move. However, after 22... ♜c7 23. ♜g5 it wouldn't be so simple for Black to defend, whereas after 22... ♙e7 we shall see that he has the chance to reach approximate equality.



23.b4!

Definitely the best move, sharpening the position in what might have seemed a state of complete "calm". I decided on this move after much hesitation. Of course if Black were to reply with the natural 23... ♜f7, then 24.bxc5 bxc5 would set up a passed c-pawn in his camp; it would be isolated, but at first sight quite viable. The sample continuation 25. ♜d3 ♜b6 26.a5 c4† 27. ♜d4 ♜d8† 28. ♜c3 ♜d3† 29. ♜c2 ♜d5 30. ♜b1 seemed to me to be convincing enough to go in for. On the other hand, I did not at once succeed in assessing the consequences of 23...c4.

23...c4 24.b5

Frustrating Black's hope of supporting his passed pawn with ...a7-a6 and ...b6-b5.

24... ♜f7

After this Black will sooner or later lose his c-pawn, whereas he did have some methods of defence that were more or less satisfactory. For example:

24...c3

24...♙a3 25.♞c2 c3 26.♙xc3 ♙b4 27.♗d2 ♞c4 28.♙xb4 ♞xe4 29.♙d6 ♞xa4 As recommended by Averbakh. Incidentally I examined this during the game, intending to carry on the fight with 30.f3.

25 ♙xc3 ♙a3

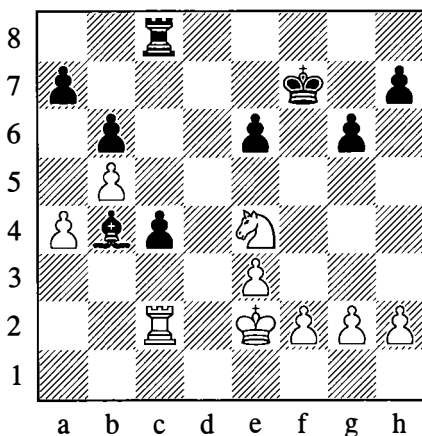
25...♞c4 26 ♗d3 ♞xa4 27 ♙d4, or 27 ♙e5.

26.♞c2 ♞c4 27.♗d3 ♞xa4 28.♙a2 ♞xe4 29.♙xa3 ♗xc3 30.♞xa7 ♞e5 31.♗xc3 ♞xb5.

In all variations White keeps a plus, though a minimal one.

Black didn't want to force the play. Botvinnik probably hadn't yet seen the regrouping of white pieces which it was essential for me to plan when I went in for the committal 23.b4. The bishop will go to c3, blocking the passed pawn. Then the knight will take aim at the pawn from d2. After that, White will only need to play g2-g3, taking the f4-square away from the enemy knight – which he will dislodge with his e-pawn.

25.♙c3 ♙a3 26.♞c2 ♗xc3† 27.♞xc3 ♙b4 28.♞c2



28...♗e7

More chances would be preserved by 28...e5, trying to hasten towards d5 with the king. In the event of 29.♗d2 c3

30.♗e4 ♗e6, the winning line indicated by Tal is not wholly convincing. After 31.f3 he gives 31...h6 32.♗d3 ♞d8† 33.♗c4 ♞d2 34.♗b3 ♞xc2 35.♗xc2 ♗d5 36.♗d3 c2 37.♗xc2 ♗c4 38.♗d2† ♙xd2 39.♗xd2, and the moment Black captures the a4-pawn, White will place his king on c4 and decide the game by creating a passed pawn on the kingside.

However, by keeping both his pieces on the board, Black can resist; for example, 31...♙a5 32.♗d3 ♞d8† 33.♗c4 ♞d2 34.♗b3 ♞d3.

29.♗d2 c3

The rook endgame after 29...♙xd2 30.♗xd2 ♞d8† (better than 30...♗d6 31.♗c3 ♗c5 32.♞d2) 31.♗c3 ♞d1 would have given Black possibilities for stubborn defence.

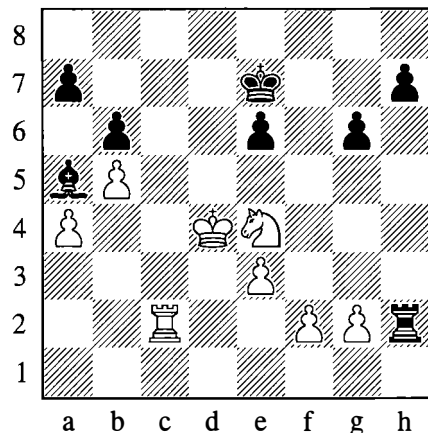
30.♗e4 ♙a5 31.♗d3 ♞d8† 32.♗c4 ♞d1

The showy 32...♞d2 would be parried by the prosaic 33.♗b3.

33.♗xc3 ♞h1?

After this, Black's position is utterly lost. Notably, what worried me most was an exchange of bishop for knight; I reckoned that a rook endgame, no matter how bleak in appearance, promised Black the most saving chances.

34.♗e4! ♞xh2 35.♗d4!



As a fighting force, the centralized white army contrasts sharply with the black pieces that are widely separated. The rook in the corner of the board, and the bishop directing its fire down the “country lane” a5-e1, have abandoned their king to the whims of fate.

35...♔d7

Black cannot of course allow the white rook onto the 7th rank.

36.g3

The safest route to victory. There were not many moves to go to the time control, but there wasn't much time left either, so there was no point in starting a line of play where everything would depend on precise calculation. After 36.g4 h5, and now 37.g5 h4 or 37.♔e5 hxg4 38.♕f6† ♔e7 39.♕xg4 ♖h5† 40.♔e4, White should win.

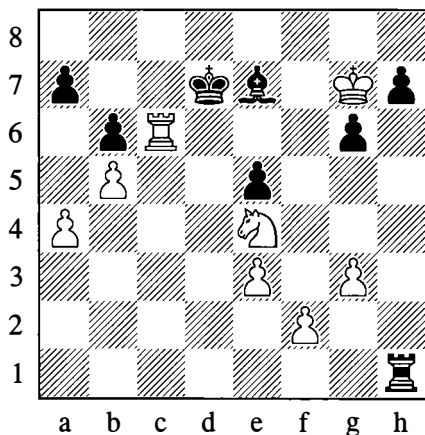
36...♙b4

Hurrying over to help!

37.♔e5 ♖h5† 38.♔f6 ♙e7† 39.♔g7 e5 40.♖c6!

Placing maximum restriction on the black king's scope for movement.

40...♖h1



41.♔f7!

The sealed move commences the shortest process for turning White's advantage into a win. From e7 the black bishop is defending a number of important points: d6, f6, g5. Now after 42.♖e6, which Black is powerless to prevent, the bishop will have to abandon its post.

41...♖a1 42.♖e6 ♙d8

The alternatives are also bad: 42...♙b4 43.♖xe5 ♖xa4 44.♕f6† ♔d6 45.♖d5† ♔c7 46.♖d4, or 42...♙c5 43.♖xe5 ♖xa4 44.♕xc5†.

43.♖d6† ♔c8

After 43...♔c7 44.♔e8, the ill-starred bishop would immediately be lost.

44.♔e8 ♙c7 45.♖c6 ♖d1

On 45...♖xa4, I intended to continue with 46.♕g5. An amusing variation is 46...♔b7 47.♕e6 ♙b8 48.♕d8† ♔a8 49.♖c8!, with the unanswerable threat of 50.♕c6.

46.♕g5 ♖d8† 47.♔f7 ♖d7† 48.♔g8

Black resigned.

1-0

Petrosian had levelled the score, and after a short draw in the sixth game, he confidently won the seventh to take the lead in the match. There followed a series of six draws, in which Botvinnik finally succeeded in shaking his opponent's formation in the Queen's Gambit Accepted. And with his victory in game 14, which saw him convincingly outplay the challenger in the ending, the World Champion drew level once more. But in the very next game, played after a three-day break, Petrosian restored the earlier *status quo*. Commenting on the 15th game of the match, Tal wrote: "However paradoxical it may seem, Tigran Petrosian's extra point had been fettering his creative drive in a significant degree."

By choosing the sharp “Botvinnik Variation” against the Grünfeld Defence, Petrosian was already pulling off a good psychological coup, and by threatening an attack on the king he provoked his opponent to go into an ending with pawn weaknesses that were reminiscent of the 5th game of the match. Just as in that earlier game, it proved beyond Botvinnik’s powers to keep up a protracted, laborious defence in an inferior ending.

GAME 67

Tigran Petrosian – Mikhail Botvinnik

Moscow (15) 1963

Notes by A. Konstantinopolsky

1.d4 ♠f6 2.c4 g6 3.♠c3 d5

As in the 5th game of the match, the World Champion chooses the Grünfeld Defence. This opening has been his faithful companion over the course of many years.

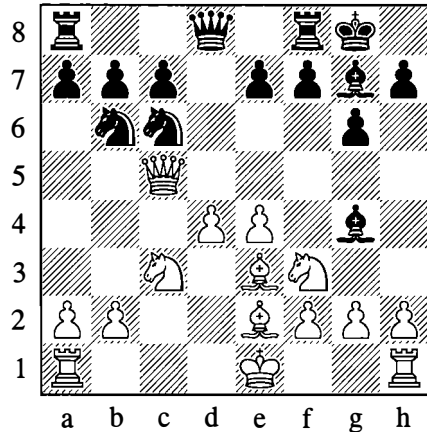
4.♞b3

This time, intriguingly, Petrosian prefers a continuation that was introduced into practice by Botvinnik, in the game Botvinnik – Levenfish, Leningrad 1933.

4...dxc4 5.♞xc4 ♠g7 6.e4 0–0 7.♠e2 ♠c6 8.♠f3 ♠d7 9.♠e3 ♠b6 10.♞c5 ♠g4

By transposition of moves, a position typical of the Smyslov System has been reached: by means of attacks with his pieces, Black endeavours to weaken his opponent’s centre pawns. The pawn on d4 is *en prise*, the knight on f3 is going to be exchanged, the black knights are constricting the white queen. On the other hand, White has definite assets: for the present he has taken over the central zone of the board, and this preponderance is not easy to neutralize. A difficult strategic struggle

is beginning. Petrosian thought for 23 minutes over his next move, and the manoeuvre with which the World Champion responded (moves 11–13) took roughly the same amount of time. This was the moment when the opponents’ plans for the subsequent play took shape.



11.d5

An interesting point is that 11.♞d1 ♞d6 would give a position from the game Botvinnik – Fischer, Varna (ol) 1962. Black then has adequate counter-chances, as Botvinnik observed in his annotations (*Chess in the USSR*, 1962, No. 12).

11...♠d7 12.♞a3 ♠xf3

Taking into account the variation 13.dxc6 ♠xe2 14.cxb7 ♞b8 15.♠xe2 ♞xb7, which would suit Black.

13.♠xf3 ♠d4 14.0–0–0 ♠xf3

Many people suggested 14...c5 15.dxc6 ♠xc6, seeing that White cannot immediately exploit the pin against the knight on d7. But Botvinnik likes more solid positions.

15.gxf3 ♠b6

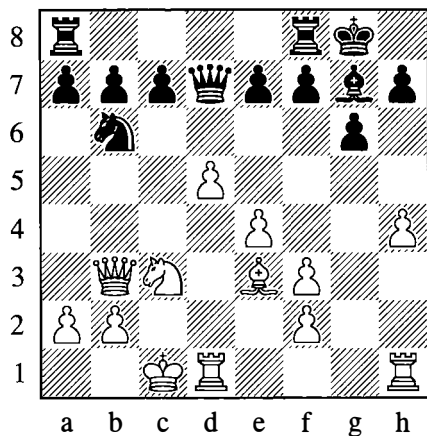
Better than 15...c6 16.dxc6 bxc6 17.♠d4!

16.♞b3 ♞d7

A more elastic move was 16...♞c8, aiming

to play ...c7-c6 and exchange the d5-pawn without delay. If 17.h4, then 17...c6 18.d6 exd6 19.♞xd6 ♞c7, and when appropriate ♞ad8 (20.♙f4 ♙h6!).

17.h4!



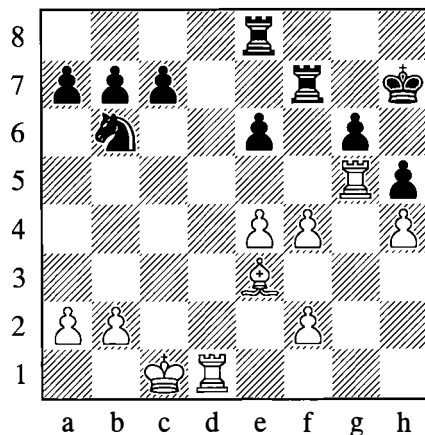
17...h5

It wasn't so easy to resolve on this advance; the pawn on g6 is weakened, and White is given the impulse for an offensive with f3-f4-f5. Was 17...c6 still a possibility? There could follow, for instance, 18.h5 cxd5 19.hxg6 hxg6 20.♙xb6! axb6 21.♘xd5 with advantage to White. So the position of the queen on d7 does count against Black, and he fails to solve his basic strategic problem – that of liquidating White's pawn outpost on d5.

18.f4 e6 19.dxe6 ♞xe6 20.♞xe6 fxe6 21.♞hg1

In this way Petrosian has obtained excellent prospects for the ending. Of course the following manoeuvre of the white knight was not all that difficult to foresee, but an exchange with 21...♙xc3 22.bxc3 would not at all improve matters for Black.

21...♙h7 22.♘b5 ♞f7 23.♘d4 ♞e8 24.♘f3 ♙h6 25.♘g5† ♙xg5 26.♞xg5



26...♘c4

This knight was covering White's entry point on d7 and should not have been moved away, as White could now have replied 27.f5! (the basic idea is 27...exf5 28.exf5 ♞xf5 29.♞d7†, and wins). A better move was 26...♞g8.

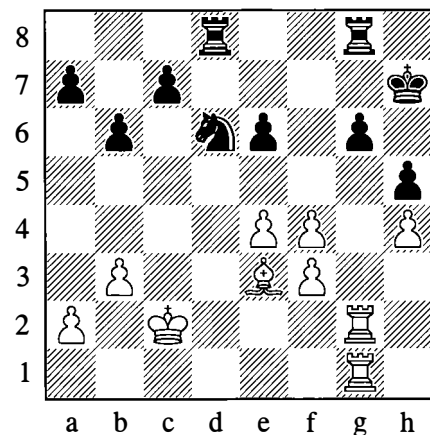
27.♞dg1 ♞g8 28.♙c2 b6

A sounder defensive system was 28...♘d6 29.f3 a6, followed by 30...♞d7 and, where appropriate, ...♘f7. With ...b7-b6 Black is creating new weaknesses which add to his difficulties.

29.b3 ♘d6!

In a rook endgame, the mobility of White's pieces would be even more significant.

30.f3 ♞d7 31.♞5g2 ♞dd8



32.a4!

An analogous “minority attack” had been carried out successfully by Petrosian in the 5th game. The advance a4-a5 will subsequently acquire great strength. White is preparing a route for his king to invade the queenside via d3-c4-b5 in variations where all four rooks are exchanged.

32...♟f7 33.♙c1 e5 34.♙e3 exf4

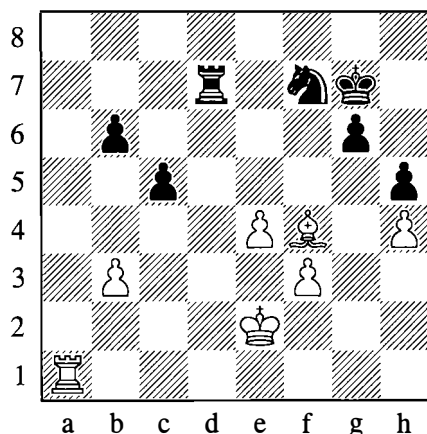
Virtually the decisive error. After this exchange, the bishop becomes still more formidable. With 34...c5 Black could just about have kept his balance even in such difficult conditions.

35.♙xf4 ♞d7 36.♞d2 ♞xd2† 37.♙xd2 ♞d8† 38.♙e2 c5 39.a5!

The “point” of the plan begun by White’s 32nd move. Along the a-file which is now being opened, the white rook will break through to Black’s rear.

39...♞d7

Not 39...b5 40.♞c1 ♞c8 41.♙e3.

40.axb6 axb6 41.♞a1 ♟g7

In this position Petrosian sealed his move.

42.♞a6

Most likely 42.♞a8 would have been even more precise. White’s more active pieces and his passed pawn secure him a decisive plus.

42...♞b7 43.♞a8 ♟f6

An attempt to exchange queenside pawns and free his rook by 43...b5 44.♞c8 c4 would fail to save Black, in view of 45.b4!, threatening an advance of the e-pawn.

44.♞c8 ♟e5 45.♙e3 ♟d7 46.♞c6† ♟f7 47.e5 ♟f8

Black’s last line of defence. It would help if he could get his knight to e6.

48.♞f6† ♟g7 49.♙e4 b5 50.♞c6 ♟f7 51.♞xc5 ♟e6

The manoeuvre is accomplished, but with the loss of an important pawn.

52.♞d5 ♟e7 53.♙e3 ♞b8 54.♞d6 b4 55.♞a6 ♞b5

One way or another, the white f-pawn will be set in motion and will decide the outcome of the fight.

56.♞a7† ♟e8 57.f4 ♟f8 58.f5

Black resigned.

1–0

A game in Petrosian’s style: a fight for the initiative in the opening and early middlegame (moves 11-18), a timely transition to somewhat the better ending, gradual restriction of the mobility of almost all the opponent’s forces, thorough preparation for the “harvest” (moves 41-50), and a simple, convincing finale. Considering the extremely stubborn resistance that Botvinnik offered, we may say that in this important encounter the challenger displayed skill of the highest order!

In spite of this defeat, it still appeared that the World Champion had not lost hope of altering the course of the match. But Petrosian

and his coach Boleslavsky thought otherwise. Here is how Grandmaster Kotov explained their strategy in an article entitled “A Duel between Giants”:

It is hard to say – perhaps it was to no purpose that Petrosian went over to dull defence and confined himself to passive measures. However, in this sluggishness, the main factor that inspired the hopes of Petrosian and his supporters was at work. It became clear that the challenger and his coach Isaak Boleslavsky were constantly pursuing one aim: to tire the veteran out as much as possible. Every game was lasting two sessions, play was carrying on in the most drawish of drawn positions. However simple the position might be, continuing the game was still worth the expenditure of nerves. An eighteen-year difference in the ages of the players is a powerful factor, and the strategists of the Petrosian camp could not leave it out of account. They made brilliant use of it. Perhaps there will be moralists who will argue that a campaign of attrition like this is out of order, that exploiting the weariness of an older opponent is indecent. We would point out that the laws of sport are cruel. Don't we see the age factor being exploited time and again in boxing and tennis?

Having regained the lead, Petrosian resolved to step up the pressure on his opponent. Nonetheless, when analysing the adjourned position of the eighteenth game, the thought of offering a draw occurred to him. His coach protested.

“Go on, play it on,” Boleslavsky simply commanded him.

“Why?” Petrosian asked in perplexity.

“Because this is the eighteenth game and Botvinnik is tired already,” the experienced tutor explained.

This game was to be crucial. “The adjourned position is in Botvinnik's favour,” Bronstein wrote. Lilienthal disagreed: “Petrosian's chances should be preferred.” Everyone perfectly well knows how skilful Botvinnik's home analysis is. He would not lose from a level position, would he? Then came the resumption, which made a grave impression on all the Grandmasters. In the final stage of the game Botvinnik made perhaps more mistakes than in all the other adjournment sessions of his chess career. In the press centre after the end of the session, when Petrosian was asked what he thought of his opponent's moves, he simply spread his arms in bewilderment.

GAME 68

Mikhail Botvinnik – Tigran Petrosian

Moscow (18) 1963

Notes by I. Kan

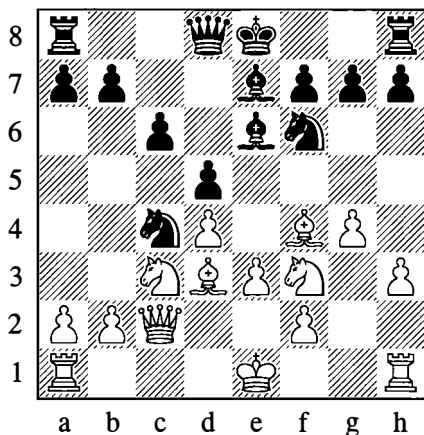
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙e7 4.cxd5 exd5
5.♙f4 c6 6.e3 ♙f5 7.g4 ♙e6 8.h3 ♘f6 9.♘f3

Stronger than 9.♙d3 (as played in the 14th game), as it makes it more difficult for Black to carry out a queenside counter-stroke; on 9...c5, White could play either 10.♙b5† or 10.♖b3.

9...♘bd7

Evidently not the best plan; 9...0–0 was a possibility. There are no objects of attack available to Black; on the other hand the pawns on h3 and g4 are not at present threatening anything. Afterwards Black would retain the option of reverting to the plan with ...c5 and ...♘c6, as occurred in the 14th game.

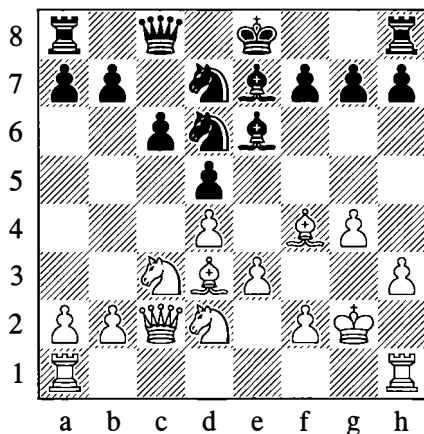
10.♙d3 ♘b6 11.♖c2 ♘c4



12.♔f1

Better 12.♔xc4! dxc4 13.e4 which threatens, after 0–0–0, to launch an offensive with d4–d5 (Boleslavsky, Suetin).

12...♘d6 13.♘d2 ♔c8 14.♔g2 ♘d7



15.f3

The brash 15.♔xh7 g6 16.♔xg6 fxg6 17.♔xd6 ♔xd6 18.♔xg6† ♔e7 would give White three pawns for a piece, but the initiative would quickly pass to Black.

[Ed. note: Vladimir Akopian doesn't rate White's possibilities so pessimistically. He continues the variation as follows: 19.♔g7† ♔f7 20.e4 ♔g8 21.♔xg8 ♔axg8 22.e5 ♔b4 23.f4, and the armada of white pawns looks impressive.]

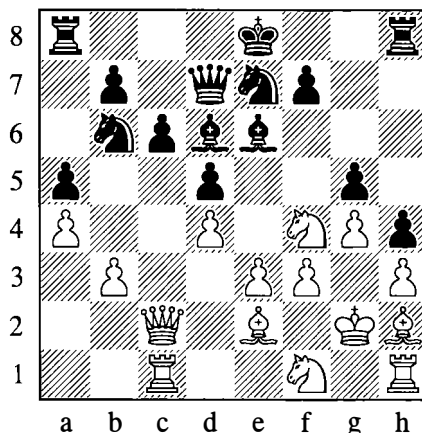
15...g6 16.♔ac1

Safe and solid, but why was 16.e4 not played? Resolute action on White's part was demanded not only by the situation in the present game but also by the state of the match. The break in the centre would have set Black more difficult problems than the move White selects.

16...♘b6 17.b3 ♔d7 18.♘e2 ♘dc8 19.a4 a5 20.♔g3

Saving his important bishop from being exchanged for Black's more passive one.

20...♔d6 21.♘f4 ♘e7 22.♘f1 h5 23.♔e2 h4 24.♔h2 g5



Gradually Black is improving the arrangement of his forces. The lengthy positional manoeuvring has brought White no concrete results.

25.♘d3

From this square the knight controls e5 and c5. A sharper move was 25.♘h5.

25...♔c7 26.♔d2

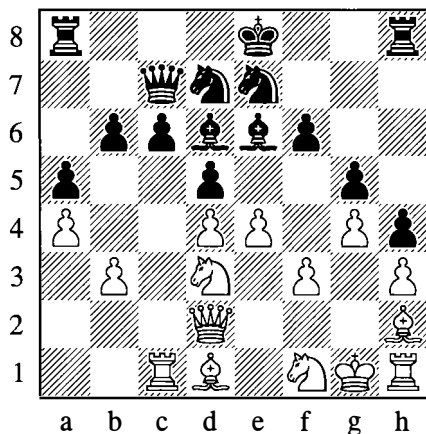
White threatens to win a pawn by 27.♔xd6 ♔xd6 28.♔c5.

26...♘d7

Black in turn takes the squares e5 and c5

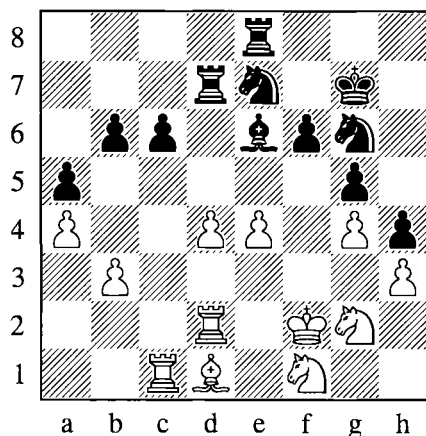
under control, and improves the placing of his knight.

27.♔g1 ♖g6 28.♔h2 ♜e7 29.♔d1 b6
30.♙g1 f6 31.e4



The long-awaited break, activating White's position.

31...♙xh2† 32.♖xh2 ♖xh2† 33.♗xh2 ♜d8
34.♙f2 ♙f7 35.♙e3 ♜he8 36.♗d2 ♙g7
37.♙f2 dxe4 38.fxe4 ♜f8! 39.♜e1 ♜fg6
40.♜g2 ♗d7



The series of moves before the adjournment has led to a complicated position on which the verdict was far from unanimous. Some

preferred White with his spatial advantage and centre pawns. Others considered that Black's solid fortifications and the possibility of actively pressurizing the centre gave *him* the better chances. Afterwards, Kotov and Flohr informed the readers of their articles that Petrosian was intending to offer a draw. It follows that he assessed the adjourned position as equal. But on resumption, the play was to bring quite a few surprises.

41.♙c2 ♙f7 42.♜fe3?

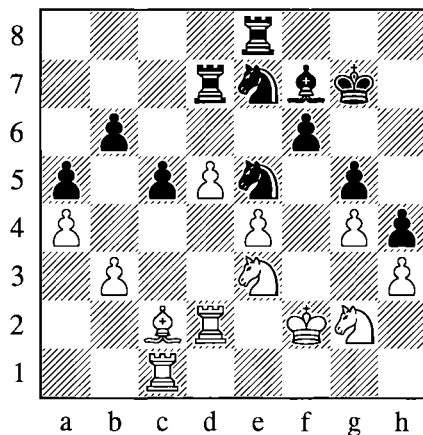
The sort of mistake that doesn't occur often in the games of the world's strongest players. Intending 42.♗cd1 and then ♜fe3, White makes the knight's move first! This was surely the result of acute fatigue.

42...c5

Making use of the opportunity. If White had played 42.♗cd1, then the reply 42...c5 would have meant conceding the d-file.

43.d5 ♜e5

The natural consequence of the changed circumstances. Occupying the dark squares, Black threatens to take full possession of the initiative. But this should not yet have brought White to defeat.



44.♗f1?

The doubling of rooks on the f-file requires time, and the crucial point is that it gives White nothing. Black manages to increase the pressure. White would have kept more chances of a draw by continuing with 44.♖c4, for example:

44...♖xc4

44...♖c8 45.♖ge3 ♗g6 46.♖e1=

45.bxc4 ♗g6

45...♖c8 46.e5 ♖xe5 47.♗f5 ♖d8 48.♗xc8

♖xc8 49.♖b2±

46.♖e3 ♖c8 47.♖f5† ♗xf5 48.exf5 ♖d6

49.♗d3=

44...♗g6 45.♗e1 ♖c8 46.♖df2 ♖f7 47.♗d2
♖d6

The obvious move, and at the same time decisive. After the exchange on f5 which White is forced to bring about, Black's formidable knight pair enters the game with great force.

48.♖f5† ♗xf5 49.exf5 c4

The start of the final attack.

50.♖b1 b5 51.b4 c3† 52.♗xc3 ♖c7† 53.♗d2
♖ec4† 54.♗d1 ♖a3

There is no satisfactory defence.

55.♖b2 ♖dc4 56.♖a2 axb4 57.axb5 ♖xb5
58.♖a6 ♖c3† 59.♗c1 ♖xd5 60.♗a4 ♖ec8
61.♖e1 ♖f4

White resigned.

0-1

This game was to be crucial for the outcome of the match. "It became clear," wrote Kotov, "that Botvinnik's play had somehow cracked, and he had lost his inherent confidence in his own powers. In the next game, the nineteenth, he was still trying to resist Petrosian's pressure, but he suffered defeat once again and resigned himself to the inevitable." The draws that followed were a formality and sealed Petrosian's convincing victory – 12½:9½.

When Botvinnik was asked how he explained his defeat in the match with Petrosian, he replied: "The new World Champion has an astonishing style of play; above all else he worries about his own safety, about depriving his opponent of the power to attack. He does this artistically, without any strain, simply intuitively... I was unable to adjust to Petrosian, I didn't succeed in dragging him away from his customary opening schemes and positions."

Years later, in his book *Achieving the Aim*, Botvinnik wrote in more detail about the problems he had come up against in the match with his successor on the chess throne: "Petrosian possesses an original chess talent. Like Tal, he doesn't try to play 'in keeping with the position' in the way that this was formerly understood. But if Tal strove to obtain positions that were dynamic, Petrosian would create positions where the events unfolded, so to speak, in slow motion. Attacking his pieces is difficult: the attacking units advance slowly, they get stuck in the marshland around where Petrosian's pieces are encamped. If eventually you do manage to work up a dangerous attack, either your time will already be running out, or fatigue will have set in. We must also note Petrosian's high level of technique in realizing a positional advantage if we are to understand the new World Champion's strength."

After the end of the match, Petrosian gave a press conference in the USSR Central Chess Club. Here are the main points he touched on:

"I made a close study of Botvinnik's play from his matches with Smyslov and Tal. This helped me to form a correct picture of my opponent's character as a player. To some extent this picture differed from the generally accepted one. For instance, Smyslov and Tal considered that Botvinnik was less strong as a tactician. This verdict proved to be mistaken.

I drew the appropriate conclusions. In the course of a month and a half, together with my helpers Boleslavsky and Suetin, I put a good deal of work into preparing the openings. But Botvinnik, somewhat to my surprise, kept to a restricted opening policy. For that reason many variations remained 'behind the scenes'.

"How did the struggle go? I knew that Botvinnik would strive to take the lead from the very first game. The new, unaccustomed circumstances had an effect on my play, and I went down to defeat. A second loss in a row could have been fatal. If Botvinnik had not exchanged queens, he would have been close to his goal. But here he was influenced by his not entirely correct assessment of my endgame play. To use his own terminology, he had not quite 'programmed' me effectively. It later turned out that Botvinnik didn't expect my cautious tactics. In actual fact, after losing a game, why is there any need to get even without delay? In this sense the third game was characteristic. My play in that game was very quiet, which came as a surprise to Botvinnik.

"One of the critical moments in the match was the seventh game. I was rather astonished that Botvinnik, such an experienced fighter, should go out to complicate with Black and choose a dubious opening. We reached a typical position which Botvinnik himself has won more than once in masterly fashion with White. In the next six games, under extremely strong pressure from my opponent, I managed to avoid loss. However great the paradox, my defeat in game 14 did me a big favour. The point is that I spent a long time analysing the adjourned position, hardly slept all night and arrived for the resumption tired. The result was that I made mistakes and lost. I then decided that the quality of the moves should be the second priority. The important thing was to come to the game with my mind fresh... [Ed. note: Petrosian transferred his "headquarters" to the village of Sukhanovo in the Moscow countryside, where he went for long

walks, played table tennis and billiards, and gave little attention to chess.]

"The nineteenth game was decisive. I sensed that Botvinnik was tired and wasn't capable of conducting a marathon contest with his former energy. It became clear that my opponent had overrated his powers. Most of the games made great demands on the players' physical strength, and this told in the fifth hour. Only fatigue can explain why Botvinnik sealed a bad move when the sixteenth game was adjourned. The conclusion that suggests itself is that one of the reasons for Botvinnik's defeat was his age. Time takes its toll..."

Among the many questions asked by journalists, there was one concerning FIDE's abolition of the return match. "I consider this correct and entirely just," Petrosian replied. "After all, the challenger is nominated as the result of an objective selection process. Once he has defeated the Champion, what's the point of arranging an extra examination? If the challenger hadn't had to qualify, it *would* have been necessary to retain the Champion's right to a re-match."

When asked about his immediate plans, Petrosian said he intended to compete frequently in tournaments with the world's strongest Grandmasters, and announced that he had accepted an invitation to the Los Angeles tournament, which had a powerful line-up of contestants.

A month and a half later, Petrosian was playing in the USA for the prestigious Piatigorsky Cup that took its name from the famous cellist. Of the eight Grandmasters participating, all had played in Candidates Tournaments, so the World Champion was guaranteed some serious competition. In the first cycle Petrosian had to settle for a mere fifty per cent on the score chart, but in the second, after a series of victories, he reasserted his status and shared 1st-2nd places with Keres.

GAME 69

Tigran Petrosian – Svetozar Gligoric

Los Angeles 1963

This game was played in the second cycle of the eight-player Grandmaster tournament. My standing, at that moment, was far from brilliant: one win, one loss and six draws gave me a total of four points and a share of 4th-5th places in the tournament table. You can understand that in all the remaining games I would need to play for a win without shirking risks.

I have played Gligoric a good many times, and on the whole the games have had decisive results. It is not irrelevant to mention that our game in the first cycle of this tournament had ended unsuccessfully for me.

1.c4 g6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♙c3 ♗g7

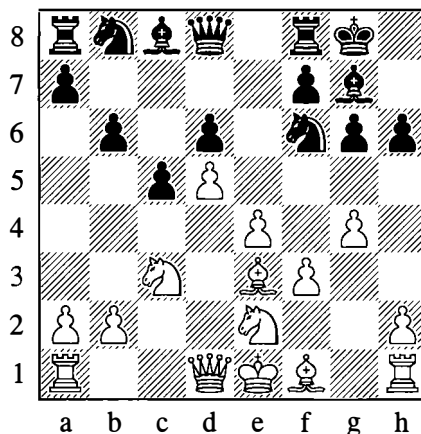
In answer to 1.e4, the Yugoslav Grandmaster's choice of opening depends on the opposition. It varies between the Ruy Lopez (in games against the stronger class of opponent) and the Sicilian (playing to win against less dangerous ones). On the other hand against 1.c4, 1.d4 or 1.♙f3, you can be sure he will remain true to the King's Indian.

4.e4 d6 5.f3 0–0 6.♗ge2 c5

Gligoric's opening repertoire is somewhat limited, but he not only made a thorough study of it long ago – he also constantly follows how various ideas in his favourite openings are evolving, how these openings are being treated by his contemporaries; and he keeps introducing improvements. So it is in the present case: he knows that in recent years I have had a weakness for developing my bishop on g5, and he plays the opening quickly, confidently and well. It is safe to say that these are the fruits of work done at home.

7.d5! e6 8.♗g5 h6 9.♗e3 exd5 10.cxd5 b6 11.g4

White is setting out on a very dangerous path. For the moment, the clear contours of a plan for a kingside pawn advance are not discernible – while there will not be long to wait before Black starts counterplay on the queenside and on the central e-file.



11...h5

If it were customary to award patents in chess, Gligoric would be the foremost claimant to be registered as “the author of ...h6-h5 in the Sämisch Variation of the King's Indian Defence, nipping White's attacking tries in the bud”. It is precisely by his example that this seemingly unfounded pawn thrust – on the flank where the opponent's right to activity is more or less acknowledged by tradition – has become one of the devices for countering White's aggressive designs.

12.g5 ♗fd7 13.f4

After 13.h4 ♗e5 the knight would essentially be occupying an unassailable position, since the only possibility of evicting it – with the f-pawn – would allow it to establish itself on g4, in the immediate vicinity of White's king's flank which has been opened up by the advance of his pawns.

13...♟a6!

A very interesting and unconventional idea. In such positions, the a-pawn usually supports the advance of its comrade the b-pawn. Here too Black threatens a raid with ...b6-b5-b4, unsettling the knight on c3 – the defender of the e4-pawn which is White's bastion in the centre. In this context the bishop on a6 is occupying a very effective post.

14.a4 ♟c4!

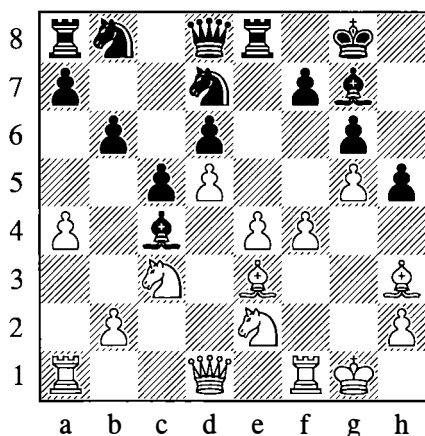
Having emerged to freedom via the a6-square, the bishop makes way for the knight.

15.♟h3

The heat of the battle increases with every move.

15...♞e8

Black probably supposed that with this move he was condemning his opponent to passive defence; the pawn on e4 is in danger.

16.0-0!

A distinctive moment in the game. If White had just made some "normal" move such as 16.♟g2 (or 15.♟g2 a move earlier), attempting to hold on to the e4-pawn, then Black's pressure would quickly have brought him success. But having pushed my pawns so far, I considered

that apart from being a source of worry, they offered great possibilities for complicating the play. Right now for instance, it appears that after 16...♟xe2 17.♞xe2 ♟xc3 18.bxc3 ♞xe4, or alternatively 16...♟xc3 17.bxc3 ♞xe4 which looks more effective, Black has already achieved material gains. But it isn't all so simple. In the former case 19.f5 gives White fully adequate chances, while I was intending to answer 16...♟xc3 with 17.♞xc3 ♟xf1 18.♞xf1; White then has substantial compensation for the exchange. I may draw the reader's attention to the possibility of e4-e5 followed by ♞c3-e4.

After lengthy deliberation, Gligoric declined the gifts in the interests of finishing his queenside development. The correct decision!

16...♞a6 17.e5!?

White's lines of retreat have long been cut off. At this point Black's reaction came as rather a surprise to me. It was with apprehension that I expected 17...♞c7, and for the first time in the game I had no entirely clear notion of how I was going to continue. If Black had chosen that move, it seems to me that this game would have illustrated once again that if you play too sharply for a win, this can turn into play for a loss. An alternative for Black, 17...dxe5 18.f5 e4 19.fxc6 fxc6 20.♟e6† ♞xe6, was not bad either.

17...♞xe5?

It will be quite a while before White manages to create conditions in which his material plus will make itself felt more and more with every move. Black's two pawns for a knight and the comfortable placing of his minor pieces, with the bishops in particular occupying good positions, create an illusion of well-being for him. And yet after this piece sacrifice, White's chances are clearly better.

18.fxe5 ♟xe5

I took account of the possible 18...♞xe5 19.♙f4 ♞xg5† and intended to answer with 20.♖h1, as the rook will not run away anywhere.

19.♞f3 ♘c7?

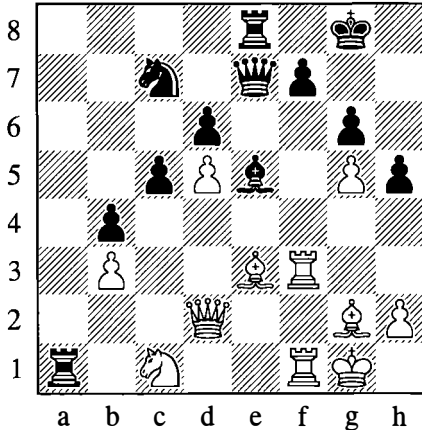
Black's chances lie in piece play, hence the active 19...♘b4 would have been stronger. The pawn advance that he is initiating is not dangerous to White in view of its slowness.

20.♞d2 ♞e7 21.♙g2 a6 22.♞b1 b5 23.axb5

Better than 23.b3 ♙xe2 24.♘xe2 bxa4 25.bxa4 ♞ab8.

23...axb5 24.b3 ♙xe2 25.♘xe2 b4 26.♞bf1 ♞a1 27.♘c1

The exchange of one pair of rooks would suit Black, relieving him of his worries about the f7-pawn.

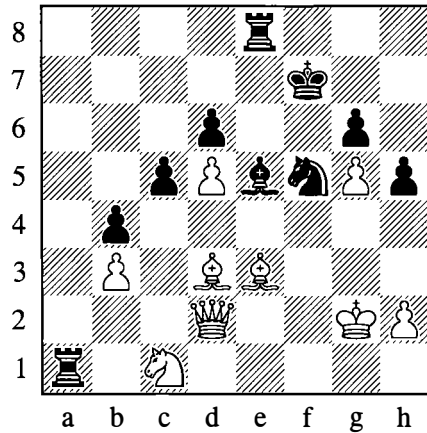


27...♘b5

An interesting moment. During the game I took this move to be a gesture of despair. As emerged afterwards, Gligoric reckoned that in spite of losing the f7-pawn he was maintaining the initiative, thanks to the rather passive placing of White's pieces. This indeed is the case, but White is now essentially a piece up, so it is no surprise that he quickly succeeds in consolidating his position. It is true that

27...♞f8 28.♙h3, tying the black knight down in view of the potential ♞xf7 and ♙e6, would also promise Black little joy.

28.♞xf7 ♞xf7 29.♞xf7 ♘xf7 30.♙f1 ♘d4 31.♘g2 ♘f5 32.♙d3!



A little tactical ploy allows White to simplify the position: 32...♙c3 33.♞f2 ♞xe3 34.♙xf5 is hopeless for Black; but then, so is the actual game continuation.

32...♘g7 33.♙xf5 gxf5 34.♞d3 ♞f8 35.♙d2 f4 36.♘f3 ♞a7 37.♞e4 ♞a3 38.♞c4 ♞a7 39.♞c2 ♞e7 40.♘d3 ♙d4 41.♞c4 ♙e3 42.♙xe3 ♞xe3† 43.♘f2 ♞h3 44.♘g1 ♞f5 45.♞e4 ♞xg5† 46.♘f1 ♞g6 47.♘xf4 ♞f6 48.♘g2

Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 70

Pal Benko – Tigran Petrosian

Los Angeles 1963

I have faced Pal Benko many times, and his play is very familiar to me. Our first game, which took place 11 years ago when we were both still young players, ended in victory for him.

In that encounter I had Black and was striving for complications at any price. Such “unlawful” disturbance of the balance eventually led me to disaster. Despite this, whenever I played Benko afterwards, I kept to the same tactics. Nor was I alone in this. Such an extremely experienced practical player and subtle psychologist as Paul Keres, in *his* games with Benko, was constantly attempting to complicate the struggle at the cost of great risk – and as a rule, the Estonian Grandmaster was successful. I have had to endure many an unpleasant minute when playing Benko, but as far as the results are concerned, I have nothing to complain about.

This time I decided to reject the fashionable King’s Indian formations, inviting my opponent to a trial of strength in the classical Queen’s Gambit. In our day there are plenty of chessplayers, especially young ones, who suppose that everything in the old-fashioned opening schemes has been studied so much that they are not worth playing. A deep delusion! With every move, the methods of the positional struggle become more profound and subtler. In a scheme that might seem thoroughly exhausted, possibilities may be found for a full-blooded fight!

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.d4 ♙e7
5.♙g5 0–0 6.e3 b6

This ancient continuation earned a poor reputation after many years of practical trials, and in our day it is rarely encountered.

7.♙c1 ♙b7 8.cxd5 exd5 9.♙xf6

Benko handles the position in his own manner. He hastens to eliminate the black knight on f6, without waiting for the other one to go to d7 in readiness to replace its colleague. Black must endeavour to advance with c7–c5. But this may lead to the formation of hanging pawns on c5 and d5, which produces sharp play if there are plenty of pieces on the board. Now the struggle will be less intense in character.

9...♙xf6 10.♙e2 ♖e7

An immediate 10...c5 can be answered either by 11.dxc5 bxc5 12.♖b3 (which actually isn’t so strong), or by 11.0–0 after which White exerts strong pressure. The point is that the development of Black’s knight entails difficulties owing to a possible exchange on c5, when the knight will have to recapture to avoid loss of a pawn. On 11...c4, the undermining move 12.b3 follows, and after the forced 12...cxb3 13.♖xb3 White has the initiative. Black therefore tries to develop his forces in such a way that his hanging pawns will possess dynamic power. In the variation mentioned, they would need to be constantly guarded.

11.0–0 ♗d8 12.♖c2 ♘d7

White appears to be dictating the course of events. Black is quite unable to pick a moment for the ...c7–c5 advance. For example: 12...c5 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.♘a4, and the attack on the c5-pawn forces 14...c4, whereupon 15.b3 follows.

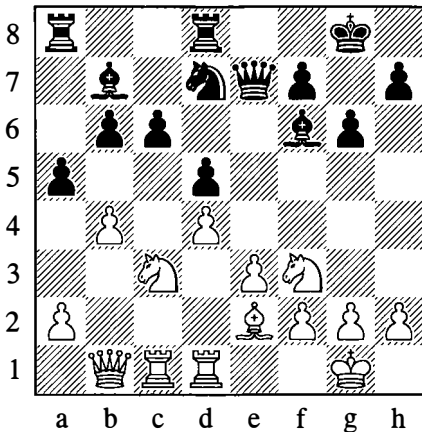
13.♗fd1

And now the d5-pawn is potentially under attack. Still, White’s measures are prophylactic more than anything else. Black can permit himself to spend a tempo on the useful move ...g7–g6.

13...g6 14.♖b1 c6

Black himself would seem to be emphasizing that the initiative is in White's hands and consenting to defend passively. He had the move 14...♖f8 available, which doesn't look bad at first sight. But White would then play 15.b4, with the positional threat of 16.b5 – which would permanently deprive Black's pawn bastion, the d5-pawn, of its natural support from the c-pawn.

15.b4 a5

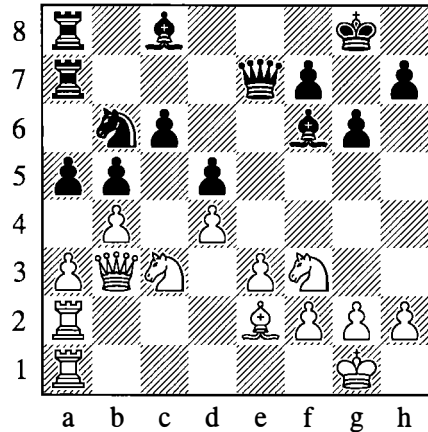


16.a3?

One of those cases where a natural reaction to the opponent's move turns out to be a serious mistake. It was essential to play 16.b5, which leads to a position with roughly equal chances after 16...c5 17.dxc5 ♖xc5. Black's play here might seem to be inconsistent. For several moves he has been avoiding a position with an isolated pawn, but now he literally compels his opponent to go into such a position. Here, however, White will not be able to exploit the weakness of the d5-pawn. Thus 18.♖d2, which aims to prepare the doubling of rooks on the d-file, is a blunder in view of an exchange on c3 with a fork to follow. If White plays a preparatory 18.♖d4, shutting off the diagonal of the bishop on f6, then after 18...♗xd4! he will be forced to recapture with the pawn; 19.♗xd4 instead would be bad in

view of 19...♖e6 and 20...d4, after which Black's pieces develop great activity. It seems to me that the normal course of events would be 18.♗f1 followed by ♖e2, and then, according to circumstances, either ♖ed4 or ♖f4.

16...b5! 17.♗b3 ♖b6 18.♗a1 ♗a7 19.♗a2 ♗da8 20.♗da1 ♗c8



White's mistake on move 16 has placed the initiative in Black's hands. The situation on the a-file is the best testimony to this. White has to watch out for a possible exchange on b4, and capturing on a5 is not in his interest. However, for the moment Black is not in a position to create substantial threats. He therefore brings his bishop from b7, where it was condemned to idleness, onto the c8-h3 diagonal.

21.♗d3

Should White succeed in transferring one of his knights to d3, it would be hard for Black to improve his position. But how is this to be done? The knight on c3 cannot leave its post as this would cost a pawn, while after 21.♖e1 ♖c4 the threat of a sacrifice on e3 is unpleasant. White therefore decides to make f5 unavailable to Black's bishop for the present.

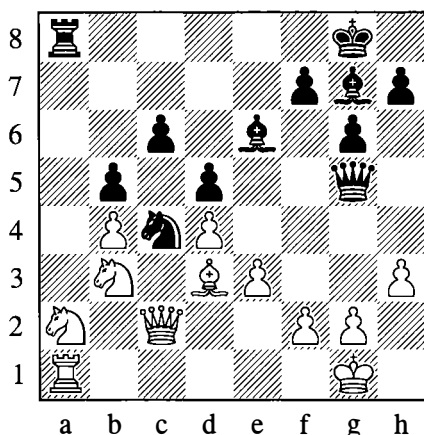
21...♗g4 22.♖d2 ♗g7 23.h3

This move is grist to Black's mill. He will now have the opportunity to work up play on both wings. White's scope for manoeuvring is limited; the formation of a "second front" merely increases Black's chances.

23...♙e6 24.♖c2

The pawn on b4 is indirectly defended, and White now aims to bring his knight from d2 to c5.

24...axb4 25.axb4 ♜xa2 26.♘xa2 ♘c4 27.♘b3 ♗g5



If White's knight were on d2, this move would merely fire a blank, as the queen would at once be attacked (♘d2-f3). It now emerges that Black has fair chances of creating threats on the kingside. White has to take measures against Black's plan of transferring his bishop to d6 and setting up a battery on the b8-h2 diagonal, with sacrifices to follow (bishop sacrifice on g3; knight sacrifice on e3).

28.♔f1 ♙f8 29.♖c1

By now, time trouble – the inseparable companion of Benko's tournament games – was creeping up on him, and he decided to keep to waiting tactics. Here he fortifies the e3-pawn to be on the safe side. Benko's feel for the position is not deceiving him: the natural

29.♘c5 could have been met by 29...♙xc5 30.bxc5 (30.dxc5 ♘xe3† 31.fxe3 ♖f6†) 30...♖xe3! 31.fxe3 ♘xe3† 32.♔e2 ♘xc2 33.♙xc2 ♜a3! and an advance of the b-pawn.

29...♙f5!

Black's pressure is mounting with every move. If White exchanges bishops, this puts paid to his hope of leaving his opponent with the "bad" one. Withdrawing to e2, or continuing with 30.♖b1 ♙xd3† 31.♖xd3 ♜a3, will not make White's position any better either.

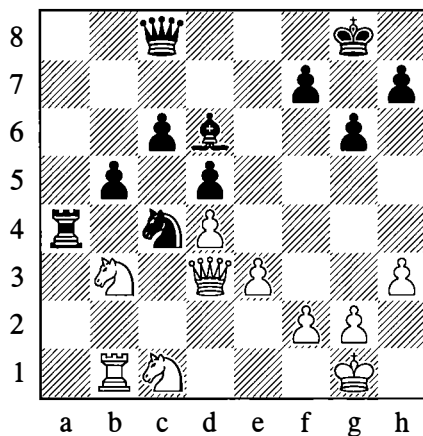
30.♙xf5 ♖xf5 31.♖c3 ♜a4 32.♔g1

Admitting that he chose the wrong square for his king on move 28.

32...♖c8!

Now it becomes obvious that Black's enduring pressure has brought its reward. To avoid worse trouble, White has to part with the pawn on b4.

33.♘ac1 ♙xb4 34.♖d3 ♙d6 35.♜b1



Despite being a pawn up, Black faces major technical difficulties in achieving victory. It isn't clear how his preponderance of forces on the queenside can be turned to account, as White's position there is quite solid. Consequently, for

the second time in the game, Black directs his gaze towards the kingside.

35...h5

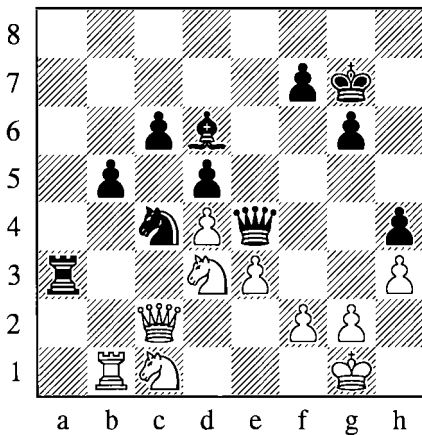
If White doesn't take counter-measures, Black will push this pawn to h4 and penetrate with his queen to h2.

36.♖e2 ♜f5 37.♘d3 ♝a3 38.♙bc1 ♔g7 39.♙b3

Both players had very little time for these last few moves. I showed hesitation in not pushing my h-pawn further, and my opponent in turn neglected the opportunity to erect barriers on the b8-h2 diagonal. By setting up his pawns on h4 and g3, White would have obtained chances for a robust defence.

However, with only *seconds* left, a committal decision can often be easier to take than when you have adequate time!

39...h4 40.♙bc1 ♜e4 41.♜c2



In this situation the game was adjourned. Pondering the move I was to seal, I came to

the conclusion that the tempting 41...♙xe3 would not lead to a clear plus. For example: 42.fxe3 ♜xe3† 43.♜f2 (better than 43.♙f2 ♙g3) 43...♝xd3 44.♙xd3 ♜xd3 45.♝f1!, with 46.♜xh4 to follow. Back at the hotel I discovered that in this line 43...♜e4 *would* preserve a clear advantage for Black, but it was too late:

41...♙c7 42.♙b3 ♙d6 43.♝a1

A more stubborn defence was 43.♜e2, sticking to waiting tactics and leaving it to Black to demonstrate his winning plan. That plan consisted of a pawn offensive on the kingside, and it would have led to a weakening of Black's own king position. White would thus have obtained some tactical chances.

43...♙xe3 44.fxe3 ♜xe3† 45.♙h1 ♝xa1† 46.♙xa1 ♜xd4 47.♙b3 ♜c4 48.♜b1 ♜c3

White has no counter-chances, and the advance of the passed pawns combined with mating threats puts Black's win beyond dispute.

49.♙bc1 c5 50.♙e2

Nor is 50.♜xb5 any good in view of 50...c4, and now 51.♜xd5 cxd5 or 51.♜b2 ♜xb2 52.♙xb2 ♙a3.

50...♜f6 51.♜xb5 c4 52.♙g1

If the knight on d3 had moved, the reply could have been 52...♜e5 or 52...♜f1†.

52...cxd3 53.♜xd3 ♜e5 54.g3 ♜xg3 55.♜d4† ♜e5

White resigned.

0–1

Chapter 9

1964-1965

The title of World Champion allowed Petrosian to plan his appearances with due regard to the next three-year cycle. Organizers are keen to invite the World Champion to the most prestigious tournaments. In the spring of 1964 Petrosian played with success in Buenos Aires where, without suffering a single defeat, he shared 1st and 2nd places with Keres.

In those years he didn't take part in the USSR Championships, which required an immense degree of commitment; for training purposes, however, he played in the 1964 Championship of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, winning it with ease.

But Petrosian did not decline to play in team events. In the summer of 1964, in the USSR Team Championship, he represented the "Spartak" team that was dear to him; and in November, at the Olympiad in Tel-Aviv, he headed the Soviet team for the first time. His performance fully matched that of other World Champions who had led the Soviet squad in previous Olympiads: six wins, seven draws, no losses. Petrosian also played successfully in the 1965 European Team Championship, registering the best result on top board.

GAME 71

Tigran Petrosian – Hans Bouwmeester

Tel Aviv (ol) 1964

Notes by Euwe

In this game we see the typical Petrosian. His play is calm, cautious and positionally well founded. Once Black's pawns are weakened, Petrosian methodically exploits the vulnerability of the f5-point.

The World Champion's play is characterized by subtle positional schemes. In my view Petrosian's style is very similar to that of Capablanca, but the latter did not play the openings as well as the present Champion.

1.c4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e3 e6 5.d4 d5

A position from the Tarrasch Defence has been reached by transposition of moves. In the good old days White usually played 6.♔d3 or 6.a3. Petrosian however chooses a different path.

6.cxd5 exd5

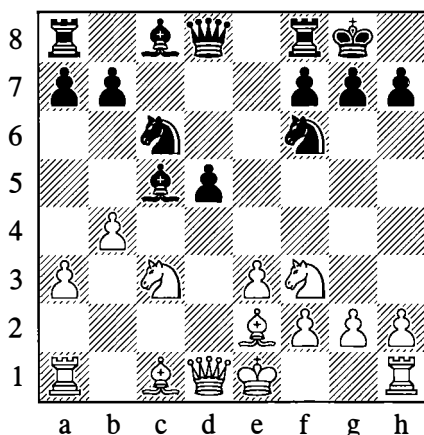
Here 6...dxd5, to avoid incurring an isolated pawn, also deserves attention. But as is well known, an isolated d5-pawn does help Black to obtain free play for his pieces.

7.♖e2 ♗d6

After 7...c4 8.♘e5 White has the advantage.

8.dxc5 ♗xc5 9.a3

With the obvious intention of seizing control of the important d4-square after 10.b4 and 11.♗b2.

9...0-0 10.b4**10...♗b6**

If 10...♗d6, then 11.♘b5 and 12.♘bd4; while 10...d4 is bad on account of 11.♘a4.

The position that has come about reminded me of one of the games from my match with Alekhine in 1937. Alekhine solved the problem of the isolated pawn as follows: 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♘e2 d5 6.a3 ♗e7 7.cxd5 exd5 8.♘g3 c5 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.b4 d4!. In that position 11.♘a4 would be no good, in view of 11...dxe3.

11.♘a4 ♗c7 12.♗b2

Before castling, Petrosian takes control of d4.

12...♗e7 13.0-0 ♗d8 14.♗c1

Threatening 15.♗xf6, and if 15...♗xf6 then 16.b5.

14...♗d6 15.♗e1

A waiting move, but at the same time it is directed against a possible future break with ...d5-d4.

15...♗e6

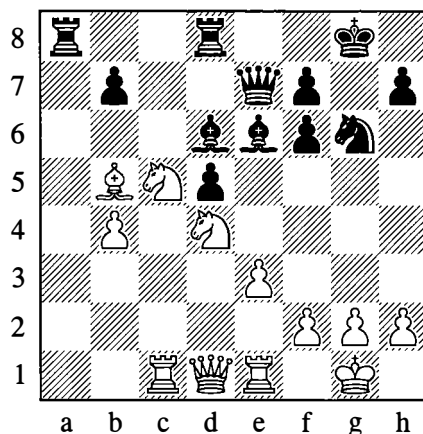
It was worth considering 15...♗g4, aiming to meet 16.♘c5 with 16...♘e4.

16.♘c5 a5?

A mistake; after 16...♘e4 Black has quite good chances.

17.♗xf6 gx6 18.♗b5!

White now threatens 19.♘xb7 ♗xb7 20.♗xc6.

18...♘e5 19.♘d4 axb4 20.axb4 ♘g6**21.♗d3!**

Very strong! White seizes the key f5-point.

21...♗xc5

This abandons Black's hope of obtaining counterplay. It is true that 21...b6 would fail to 22.♘xe6 fxe6 23.♘c6. The right course was 21...♗dc8, and if 22.f4 then 22...♘f8.

22.♖xc5 ♜dc8 23.♖xc8 ♙xc8 24.b5 ♖b4
25.♖f1

Freeing the queen from defending the rook on e1.

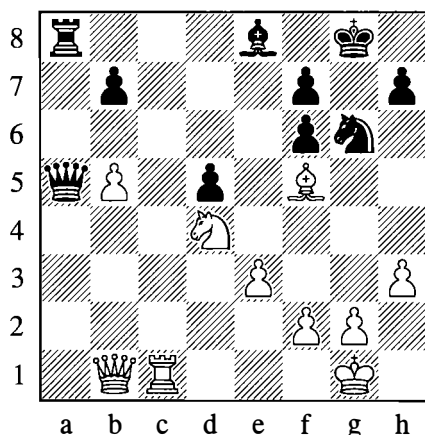
25...♗c3 26.♖b1!

White endeavours to drive the black queen back and resume active play against the positional weaknesses in his opponent's camp.

26...♙d7 27.♙f5 ♙e8

A better move was probably 27...♗c7.

28.♖c1 ♖a5 29.h3



As long as there are major pieces on the board, a "loophole" for the king is essential. White has no reason to hurry, and generally speaking Petrosian is never one to be hasty.

29...♖b6 30.♖c2 ♖a5

To meet 31.♖c7 with 31...♖a3.

31.♖c5 ♖a2

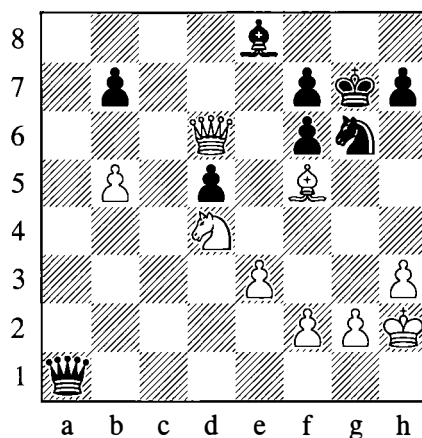
With 31...♖d2 Black would be defending the d5-pawn indirectly. But White would then continue with 32.♖c2 ♖e1† 33.♙h2, after which 33...♖a1 fails to 34.♖c8.

32.♖d6 ♖b2

White answers 32...♙g7 with 33.♖c7.

33.♖b1 ♖a1 34.♖xa1 ♖xa1† 35.♙h2 ♙g7

On 35...♖a2, White decides the game by 36.♖d8 ♙f8 37.♙d7.



36.♙xg6! hxg6 37.♖e7 ♖a8 38.♙e6† ♙h7

Other moves allow a quick mate.

39.♙c7 ♖b8 40.b6

Black resigned. A classic game!

1-0

GAME 72

Tigran Petrosian – Mark Taimanov

Moscow 1964

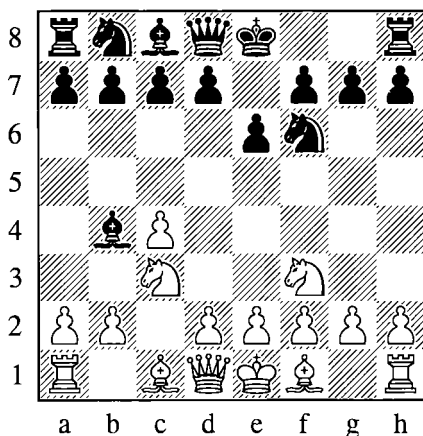
It's a good thing when you know that your opponent is sure to play a particular opening or variation. His opening consistency allows you to prepare for the game in advance and perhaps to discover a flaw in his favoured set-up. That is what many people suppose. And yet someone who keeps repeating one and the same line is likely to be familiar with all its subtleties and to feel in his element when playing it.

Mark Taimanov is the author of a high-quality monograph entitled *The Nimzo-Indian Defence*. I was once so rash as to play the Nimzo-Indian against him with Black. That was in the

1953 Candidates Tournament in Switzerland. Taimanov conducted the game superbly and was awarded a brilliancy prize for it. That very game may have supplied the starting point for the opening policy that I basically follow: not to let my opponent employ his pet schemes. In almost any position, the boundless possibilities of chess enable you to find something new, or at least a continuation that hasn't been extensively studied. My subsequent games with Taimanov featured the Queen's Gambit, various queen's pawn lines with the bishop developed on g5, the Queen's Indian Defence, the Meran Variation, the King's Indian, other Indian lines...

1.c4 e6 2.♘c3 ♘b4 3.♙f3 ♙f6

This move order, in which Black ignores White's efforts to avoid the Nimzo-Indian and plays "his own" moves, is being seen more and more frequently. Only further practical testing will establish whether Black does better to exchange on c3 on his third move, and accordingly whether it is more accurate for White to defend his knight with an immediate 3.♞c2.

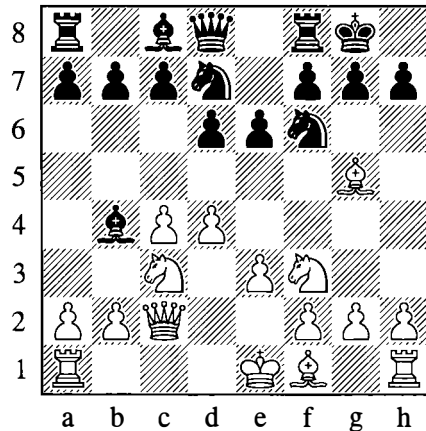


4.♞c2 d6 5.d4 0-0 6.♙g5

To pin the knight on c3, Black's bishop has deserted the kingside. In addition, its line of retreat has been cut off. Hence White's wish

to develop his own bishop on g5 is perfectly understandable.

6...♙bd7 7.e3



7...♞e8

A similar development of the queen (if a one-square move with the strongest piece inside its own camp *can* be called development) is quite often employed by White in the King's Indian Attack. This manoeuvre is not new in the Nimzo-Indian either. By way of a precedent, I may point to Reshevsky – Keres in the World Championship match-tournament of 1948.

At this point I thought for a long time but couldn't find any defects in Black's set-up. I may mention that that the usual 7...♞e7 would have kept the game within the channel of conventional plans. True, after 8.♙d3 h6 White might venture on 9.h4, but then 9...e5 would promise him nothing good.

8.♙h4

Now on 8...♙xc3† White can retake on c3 with the queen, preserving a stable pawn structure; since his bishop has left g5, Black's 9...♙e4 attacks the queen only. In the event of 8...♙xc3† 9.♞xc3 ♙e4 10.♞c2 f5 11.♙d3 ♙df6, White can castle queenside. The answer to 11...♞g6 (instead of 11...♙df6) can be 12.♙g1. The point is not at all to preserve the

pawn on g2; this pawn is destined for the role of a battering ram to pierce Black's fortifications.

8...e5

In order to guarantee "employment" for the bishop on c8, Black must somehow "unharness" the knight pair on d7 and f6, which is not so simple. For that reason it would have made sense to play 8...b6, preparing to develop the bishop on b7. But Taimanov has thought up something else.

9.0-0-0 c6

With the obvious intention to play 10...e4 and 11...d5.

10.d2

Not only prophylaxis. The point d6 may prove weak.

10...a6

The kings have taken cover on opposite wings, which usually creates the conditions for mutual attacks. In the present game, however, the pieces on both sides are none too suitably placed for an onslaught. Hence it is natural that in the forthcoming battle an important role will be assigned to the pawns. By advancing, they will throw back the enemy pieces and thus enhance the activity of the pieces on their own side.

White of course does not wait for Black to play ...b7-b5 (the position of the pawn on c4 is naturally useful to Black's operations).

11.dxe5 dxe5 12.dde4 e6

It was tempting to exchange with 12...dxe4 13.dxe4, so as to follow with 13...f5, attacking the knight and simultaneously gaining space for the queen. For all its outward attractiveness, the knight's invasion on d6 is scarcely dangerous to Black. Only he must not be afraid to part with his dark-squared bishop. After 14.d6 e6 15.exd6 e7 16.g3 e8

17.e2 e7 18.e4 d5, Black's position is perfectly satisfactory.

Let us try looking at what would happen if White left his knight on e4 *en prise* and played 14.c5. A possibility would be 14...e7 15.e4+ d8 16.g3 a5 17.d6 dxc5 18.dxc8 fxc8 19.a3 b5 20.e2 e7 21.axb4 d6 22.d1 axb4, with a strong attack. However, if White inserts 19.e2 in this line, he acquires a plus.

13.dxf6+ dxf6 14.e3 h6

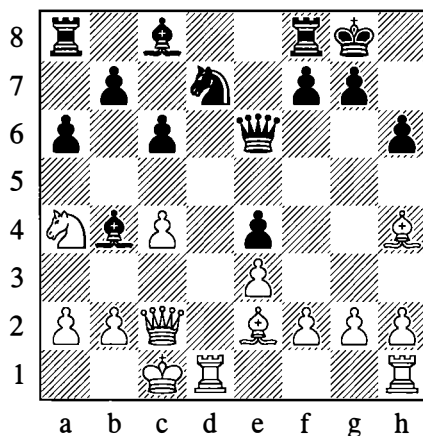
The open file in the centre is a sign of possible exchanges of the major pieces. White makes an attempt to sustain the flagging "pulse" of the position.

15.d4 e4

After the game my opponent gave no explanation as to why he didn't play 15...b5. After 16.d6 e8 17.dxc8, Black has 17...e4, not a difficult move, which gives him a good game.

16.e2 d7?

Here too Black should have played 16...b5, although this time White would not be forced to move his knight to b6. By returning to c3, the knight would take aim at the e4-pawn.



17.e4

Taimanov either overlooked this simple move or underestimated it. The pawn on e4 is now under attack. After c4-c5 (or at some stage c4xb5), the bishop on b4 will be attacked too. To add to this, White gains time for doubling his rooks on the d-file. You rarely manage to achieve so much with one move!

17...♙e8 18.♜hd1

A good alternative is 18.a3 and then 19.c5. I liked the move in the game because it sets up a threat of 19.♜xd7 followed by 20.♜b6.

18...b5

A capacity for patient waiting is alien to Taimanov, and he strives to put life into his pieces, setting a small trap at the same time. If White were now to imagine that he could win the game without much trouble after 19.cxb5 axb5 20.♞xb4 bxa4 21.♞xa4 ♞xa4 22.♞xa4, then the reply 22...♜c5 would be awaiting him, after which Black has chances to save himself. Nonetheless 18...b6 would have been more tenacious. The c4-pawn would be halted, and in case of 19.♜xd7 ♜xd7 20.♜xb6 Black would have 20...♞a7 available.

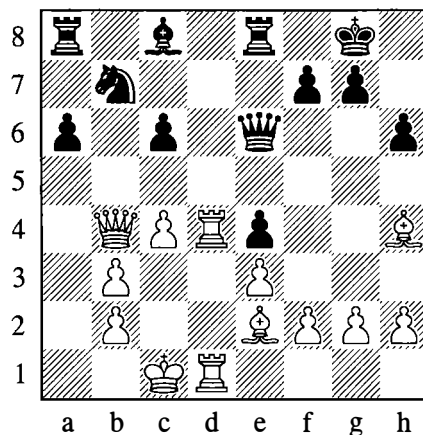
19.♜c3 ♜xc3

In conjunction with the following move, this is tantamount to capitulation. Black has been planning to march his knight to d3, but at this point for some reason he refrains from 19...♜c5. On 20.cxb5, he could have played 20...♜d3† 21.♜xd3 exd3 followed by 22...♜xc3 and ...cxb5.

20.♞xc3 b4

Black would retain more chances with 20...♜b6.

21.♞d2 b3 22.axb3 ♜c5 23.♞b4 ♜b7



Black's situation is hopeless. White's extra pawn with the better position enables him to gain the victory.

24.♞b6 a5 25.♜g3 c5 26.♞xe6 ♞xe6 27.♞d2

A more incisive line was 27.♜d8† ♜xd8 28.♜xd8† ♜h7 29.♜g4 ♞c6 30.♜f5† ♜xf5 31.♞xa8, after which the weakness of the pawns on a5 and c5 makes itself felt.

27...♞b6 28.♜c2 ♜e6 29.♞a1 f6 30.h3 ♜f7 31.♜g4 f5

With the disappearance of the light-squared bishops, the points d5 and d7 would be accessible to the white rooks. But now White's other bishop becomes very strong.

32.♜e2 ♞b4 33.♜e5 a4 34.♞xa4 ♞bxa4

If 34...♞xa4 35.bxa4 ♜xc4, then 36.♜xc4 ♞xc4† 37.♜c3 with threats of 38.b3 and 38.♜d7†.

35.bxa4 ♞xa4 36.b3 ♞a2† 37.♜c1 ♞a3 38.♜b2 ♞a6 39.♜c3 g6 40.♜d1 ♜e7 41.h4 h5 42.♜f1 ♜d8 43.♜e5 ♜f7 44.♜f4 ♜f6 45.♜e2 ♜e5 46.♞a1

A little trick is that in answer to 46...♞xa1 White first plays 47.♜e5† and then 48.♜xa1. After that, the endgame with bishops on the same colour (just like the opposite-bishop

ending after 46...♖d3† 47.♙xd3 ♖xa1 48.♗xa1 exd3 49.♗b2, incidentally) is an easy win for White.

46...♖b6 47.♗c3 ♜c6 48.♙c7

Black resigned, as after 48...♖b7 49.♙d6 he loses a second pawn.

1–0

In 1965 Petrosian took part in the international tournament held in the capital of Armenia. The World Champion twice shared his impressions of the Yerevan tournament with the chess fans – before and after the contest.

Before:

In the practice of chess tournament organization, there are plenty of examples of a contest becoming traditional, an annual event – so that chess life is hardly imaginable without it. Hastings in England, Beverwijk in Holland, Mar del Plata in Argentina – these places have become known to the whole world, not so much as resorts as on account of their important chess tournaments.

Fathered by the USSR Central Chess Club, the tournament now starting in Yerevan is at a much younger age than its foreign cousins: it is taking place for only the seventh time. However, its good reputation is growing from one contest to the next. The Central Chess Club's tournaments always have a strong and interesting list of competitors, but there has never before been such a constellation as this time. I shall not speak of each one individually; I shall just confine myself to saying that among the participants in the Yerevan International there are many bright creative personalities.

As for myself, I consider my participation in the tournament as one of the stages in my preparation for the match with the challenger for the World Championship title.

After:

The event aroused immense interest in Yerevan and probably throughout the world. The Theatre of Opera and Ballet, with room for 1200 people, was packed full every day. Grandmaster Filip was simply staggered by the influx of fans. He asked how we had succeeded in attracting spectators in such a quantity.

The tournament ended as it should have done. In the final table, each of us occupied the position that fully corresponded to the level of his play over the whole course of the contest. I am referring to myself too, of course.

Petrosian shared 2nd-3rd places with Stein, behind Korchnoi. With his usual objectivity he admitted that the Soviet Champion had played more enterprisingly. They both went through without loss, but the tournament winner had two fewer draws to his name.

GAME 73

Miroslav Filip – Tigran Petrosian

Yerevan 1965

1.d4 g6 2.g3 ♗g7 3.♙g2 c5 4.c3

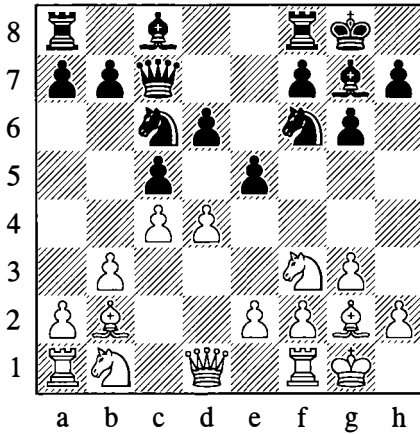
The Czech Grandmaster selects the most “solid” continuation, in which it isn't easy for Black to complicate the game.

4...♖c7 5.♗f3 ♜f6 6.0–0 0–0 7.b3 d6 8.♙b2 ♜c6 9.c4

After the somewhat unconventionally played opening, the position assumes familiar contours.

9...e5

White now faces a choice: to close the centre, leading to a complex struggle for which, as his 4th move showed, he was not in the frame of mind; or else to exchange the central pawns.

**10.d5**

After lengthy cogitation Filip decided to close the centre after all. After 10.dxc5 dxc5 he probably didn't like the idea of the black pawn pushing on to e3; moreover with a black rook quickly appearing on d8, the white queen would not feel entirely comfortable.

10...♖a5

Obviously 10...♖e7 would be met by 11.♖xe5 and 12.d6.

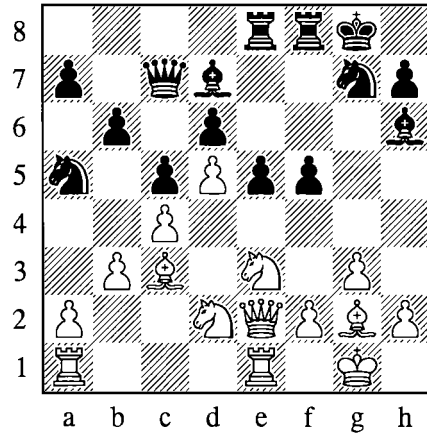
However, 10...♖d4 would not be bad.

11.♖e1 ♜b8 12.♖c2 ♙d7 13.♖d2 ♖h5 14.e4 ♙h6

The struggle is basically centred on an advance of the f-pawns. Neither the white one nor the black one can move at the present moment. For White, f2-f4 would lead to loss of material, while ...f7-f5 for Black would be positionally disadvantageous, as after an exchange on f5 he would have to place the e4-square at his opponent's disposal.

15.♜e1 ♜be8 16.♖e3 b6 17.♙c3 ♖g7 18.♜e2

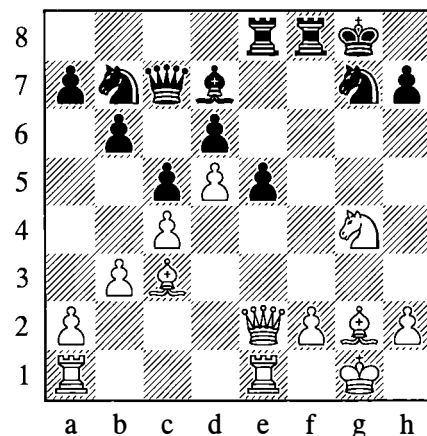
Better 18.♖g4.

18...f5 19.exf5 gxf5

Black has achieved his aim. Admittedly the pawn couple that has arisen on e5 and f5 lacks mobility at present, but Black has a possibility to improve his chances by bringing his knight from a5 to the kingside, along the route a5-b7-d8-f7.

20.♖df1 ♖b7 21.g4?

An unfortunate move. If White wanted to advance this pawn it would have made sense to play a preliminary 21.h3.

21...♙xe3 22.♖xe3 fxg4 23.♖xg4**23...♜d8!**

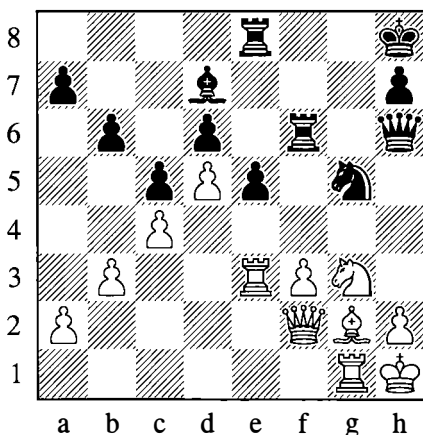
The strongest continuation. By bringing his queen across to the kingside Black takes firm possession of the initiative.

24.f3 ♖h5 25.♗d2 ♜f4 26.♙xf4 ♜xf4

Positionally White is lost. Black can combine his attack on the kingside with the threat to take the game into an ending. The point is that White now has a “bad” bishop.

27.♜f2 ♜h4 28.♜e4 ♜h8 29.♜g3 ♜d8 30.♜f2 ♜h6 31.♜e4 ♜f7 32.♜h1 ♜f6 33.♜g1 ♜g5 34.♜e3

White’s last few defensive moves, basically trying to keep everything covered, have deprived his king of all mobility, giving Black a notable tactical opportunity.



34...♜xh2†

Spectacular but not complicated.

35.♜xh2 ♜h6† 36.♜h3

A beautiful position arises after 36.♜h5 ♜xh5† 37.♜g3 ♜g8!! After this quiet move Black threatens a deadly knight check on e4.

36...♜xh3 37.♜f5

White fails to find his best chance. After 37.♜g2 he would get off with the loss of a mere pawn, though it is true that the endgame would be hopeless for him.

37...♜xf5 38.♜f1 ♜f4† 39.♜g3 ♜g8† 40.♜f2 ♜h3†

White resigned, seeing that either king move would be met by 41...♜xg1, “checkmating” his queen.

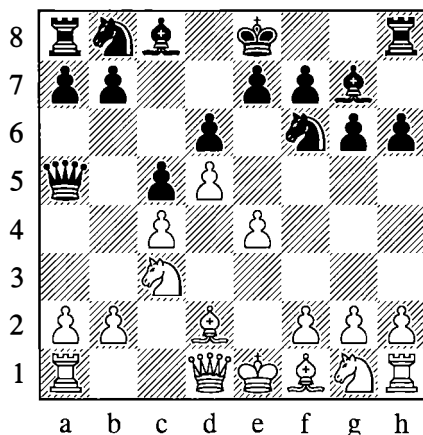
0–1

GAME 74

Tigran Petrosian – Lothar Schmid

Yerevan 1965

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 d6 4.♜c3 g6 5.e4 ♜g7 6.♜g5 h6 7.♜f4 ♜a5 8.♜d2



White would seem to have lost two tempi with his bishop excursion. But Black has still to demonstrate that 6...h6 and 7...♜a5 were useful moves.

8...e5 9.♜d3 ♜h5

This knight will presently have to move back again. But the closed nature of the position excuses the players for some “meandering” with their pieces.

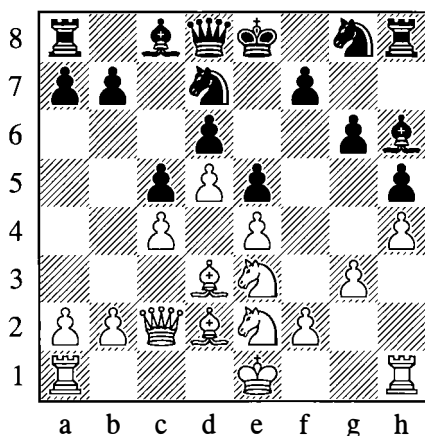
10.♜ge2 ♜d7 11.g3

The plan initiated by this move is too slow. It would have been better for White to complete his development and then take action depending on how Black played.

11...♖h6 12.h4 h5 13.♔c1

White temporarily thwarts his opponent's intention of exchanging the dark-squared bishops, which in this situation would rather favour Black.

13...♖g8 14.♖d1 ♔d8 15.♔c2 ♕h6 16.♖e3



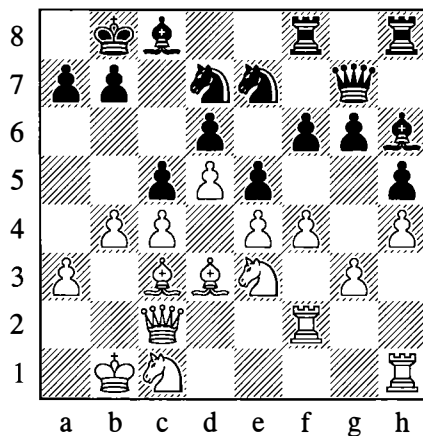
We may take stock of the initial phase of the struggle. On Black's side, the travellers – his queen and his king's knight – have returned to their hearth and home, where, strange as it may seem, they are no worse placed than if they were formally developed. It is now for the pawns to have their say. The first player to succeed in organizing and implementing a pawn break can count on seizing the initiative. White's chances are brighter: he can operate unhindered with either his f-pawn or his b-pawn, whereas Black, for the moment, lacks the possibility for active play. In a difficult situation Lothar Schmid finds a noteworthy defensive idea.

16...♔f6 17.♖f1 ♖b6 18.f3 ♕h3 19.♖f2 0-0-0 20.0-0-0 ♖b8

Black has somehow managed to develop his queenside and bring his king to a safe place. With his last move he made room for his light-squared bishop, which will have to return home

to permit the knight to go to d7. From there, the knight will be fortifying the e5-square, around which a battle is in the offing.

21.♖h1 ♕c8 22.♖b1 ♖e7 23.f4 ♖d7 24.♕c3 ♔g7 25.a3 f6 26.b4 ♖df8 27.♖c1



27...g5?

Black is fed up with patient defence and attempts to go into action, not shrinking even from a pawn sacrifice: after 28.hxg5 fxg5 29.fxe5, White could pick up the pawn on h5. In the event of 27...f5, White would have had to prove that he had not been risking too much by commencing pawn operations all over the board at a less than wholly suitable moment.

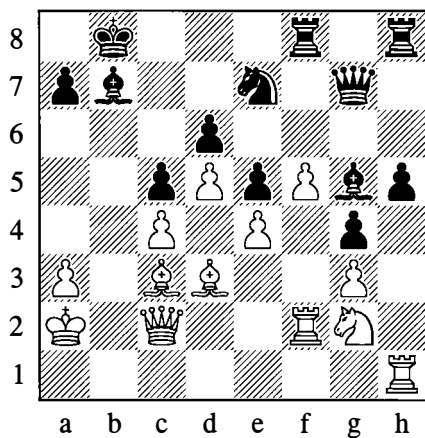
28.hxg5 fxg5 29.f5

Safely negotiating the underwater reef that has appeared, White prefers lasting positional pressure to the win of a pawn.

29...g4 30.♖g2 ♕g5 31.♖b3 b6 32.♖a2 ♕b7 33.bxc5 ♖xc5?

After this move Black lands in a lost position by force. After 33...bxc5 34.♖a5 White would still maintain a clear plus, but events would not take such a headlong course.

34.♖xc5 bxc5



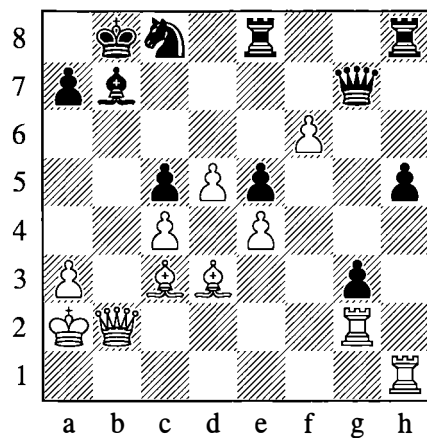
35. d4 Qxf4

This move is forced, but now the pawn on e5 comes under siege.

36. gxf4 g3 37. Bg2 Qc8

Or 37...h4 38.fxe5 h3 39.exd6 hxg2 40.Bg1 which is also bad for Black.

38. fxe5 dxe5 39. Bb2 Re8 40. f6



Overloaded by defending the pawns on e5 and g3, each of which plays a crucial role, the black queen is now forced to leave one of them without protection.

40... Bg5

A somewhat better option was 40... Bxf6. Now an immediate showdown ensues.

41. f7 Re7 42. Bh3 h4 43. Bg3

Black resigned. The following finish would be possible: 43...hxg3 44.Bxh8 Bxf7 45.Qxe5+ Qa8 46.Bxc8+ Qxc8 47.Bb8#.

1-0

Chapter 10

1966

The match with Spassky for the world crown, starting in Moscow on 11 April 1966, was to be a gauge of Petrosian's preparedness on the basis of the tournaments he had chosen to play in, during the foregoing three-year cycle. Predictions for the outcome of the match were fairly cautious. Spassky's tournament performances had been superior to Petrosian's. Moreover everyone had been impressed by the challenger's self-assured play in his Candidates matches with Keres and Geller and, in particular, by his concluding hat trick of wins in the final duel with Tal.

Despite this, the opening phase of the Championship match went Petrosian's way. Commenting on it, Tal observed: "In the first three games Petrosian either came close to winning (in the second and third) or had the chance to acquire a large plus (in the first). In these games Petrosian succeeded in channelling the play in the direction he wanted. In the opening and the strategic middlegame, he outplayed the challenger." The first six games ended in draws, and in the seventh Petrosian scored a superb win. Then after two more draws he created another masterpiece in game ten. The twelfth game could have brought Spassky to the brink of disaster: when it seemed that the World Champion's mighty attack was going to conclude with a devastating "see-saw", he made a careless slip in time trouble. Robert Fischer's appraisal of the match, in an interview with the *Trud* journal, is significant: "There were two games I liked best, both won by Petrosian – the seventh and tenth. They are full of bold, interesting plans. In both cases the World Champion's deep strategic plan was crowned by brilliant tactical strokes." Petrosian's failure in game 12 became a turning point in the match. The time-out that he took could not soothe the effect of the missed win. It merely assisted Spassky's "rebirth" – he won the thirteenth game, and from there the match followed an unpredicted scenario. Nonetheless the World Champion managed to keep one point ahead until game 22, and when Spassky overstepped the bounds of legitimate risk in that game, Petrosian won it. The remaining two games were irrelevant to the title fight. Petrosian had retained the title of World Champion.

This was a triumph for his competitive approach. In one of his interviews afterwards, Petrosian stated: "In my own mind I could not separate the match with Botvinnik from the one with Spassky. As I saw it, it was only by winning this match that I could prove that my victory in the earlier match had not been an accident."

GAME 75

Boris Spassky – Tigran Petrosian

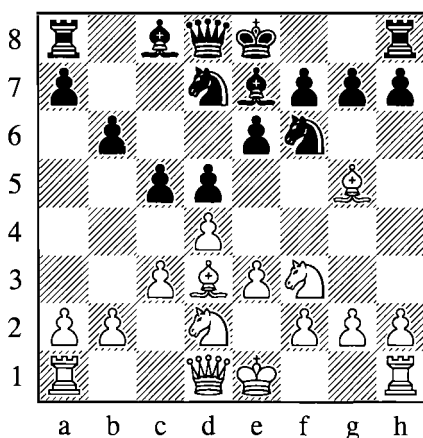
Moscow (7) 1966

In the process of a tournament struggle, when the play abounds in fine psychological nuances, the following stratagem is possible though not without its dangers. Play an opening that your opponent has thoroughly studied, in the hope that by fighting against his own weapon he will be struggling not only with real dangers but also partly with imaginary ones. Spassky adopted this approach against me a few times in the course of our World Championship matches. It was only natural that he should not neglect the variation we are going to see now.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 e6 3.♙g5

Someone commented that this choice of variation was “inviting Petrosian to play in the yard of the house where he had grown up”.

3...d5 4.♘bd2 ♙e7 5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♙d3 c5 7.c3 b6



Don't go looking for a contradiction between this move and what I recommended in the notes to Petrosian – Liublinsky (game 8). Black has no objection to a knight invading

on e5, on condition that he himself has not yet castled. On the other hand there is no better square for the queen's bishop than b7. So with a choice of two good moves, I decided to play the one that Spassky, probably, was not very much expecting.

8.0-0 ♙b7 9.♘e5 ♘xe5 10.dxe5 ♘d7 11.♙f4

White is following a familiar path. The pawn is transferred to e5, and the dark-squared bishop is retained for the coming fight. But there is one very big “but”. Black has not yet castled, and this, at bottom, denies White any prospects for using his e5-pawn as an active instrument. On the contrary, White's advanced post becomes an object of attack. However much the commentators might have raged afterwards, it would have been more sensible to steer the game into a placid channel by exchanging bishops on e7, following with f2-f4, and renouncing ambitious plans.

11...♙c7

A more resolute line was 11...g5 12.♙g3 h5, forcing 13.h3 – after which Black's position is highly attractive.

12.♘f3 h6!

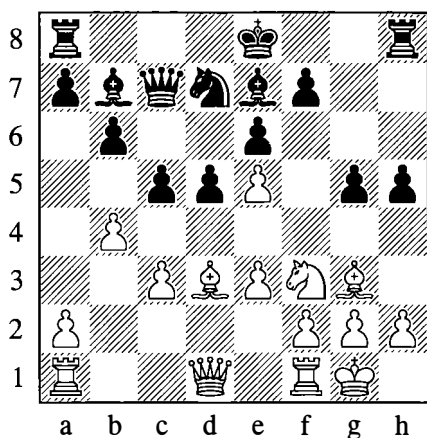
A reminder that the attack with the g- and h-pawns has not been removed from the agenda.

13.♙g3 g5! 14.b4?!

A good sign. By offering a pawn sacrifice, White is virtually admitting that he is already displeased with the course of the struggle, the character of the play. For Black, there is no sense in accepting the pawn sacrifice and handing the initiative to his opponent. After 14...cxb4 15.cxb4 ♙xb4 16.♘d4, Black's extra pawn would be unable to play a serious part for a long time to come, while White's attacking

chances – involving a queen sortie to g4 or h5, the occupation of the c-file by a rook, and a possible advance of the f-pawn – would be more than substantial. Of course if Black had no other, more active plan, then he could take the pawn and try to demonstrate that he had a perfectly defensible position.

14...h5



15.h4

Also after the natural 15.h3, White would be unable to hold on to his e5-pawn in view of the advance of Black's g-pawn, which would be inevitable sooner or later. Just now, Black is not tempted by the variation 15...g4 16.♖g5 ♜xe5 17.♙b5†.

15...gxh4 16.♙f4

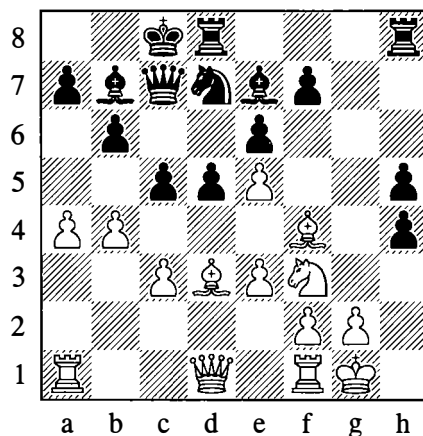
For the moment, White has secured the defence of the e5-pawn.

16...0-0-0!

A characteristic moment in the game. The players have extracted the maximum from the forces already developed, but the rooks are still out of play, and finding a place for them is the top priority. Viewed in this light, the fact that stands out is that by capturing on h4 Black has secured the g-file for a rook. Spassky appears not to have grasped this feature of the

position, as otherwise, for better or worse, he would have exchanged on c5, so as to open the b-file if Black recaptured with the pawn. On the other hand if a black *piece* appeared on c5, White could send his a-pawn into battle.

17.a4?



17...c4!

When the game was over, I discovered that this move had astonished those present. Indeed its drawback is obvious: the d4-square becomes the property of the white pieces. But only in name, I would add. White cannot derive any benefit from stationing his queen or, let us say, a rook on this square. What of the knight, a piece which is especially well placed on blockade squares of this type? In the present case the knight is denied the possibility of going to d4, as it is occupied first and foremost with defending the e5-pawn. Thus Black's hands are freed for operations in the g-file. Examining the way the game continues from here, we should not forget about one threat that is constantly in the air – the threat to bring Black's bishop to g7, winning what is not the pride but the weakness of White's position, his pawn on e5.

18.♙e2?

White had the excellent move 18.♔f5! available. If Black were to snap at the bait with 18...exf5 19.e6 ♔d6 20.♔xd6 ♖xd6 21.exd7† ♜xd7, he would emerge two pawns up – but that is when White *would* play 22.♟d4! and stand at any rate no worse. In that position the difference in strength between the bishop and knight would be great, and Black's pawn weaknesses would be irreparable. The most intriguing thing is that Spassky saw 18.♔f5 and demonstrated it immediately after the game was over. Nevertheless he decided against transferring his bishop to h3 (should Black decline to capture on f5). On h3 the bishop would be rather unaesthetically placed, resembling some odd kind of overgrown pawn. Yet it would be fulfilling an important function as the defender of the pawn on g2.

18...a6!

Properly speaking, this unobtrusive move contains the essence of Black's plan. Now no matter how White handles his a- and b-pawns, he will not be able to open lines on the queenside. This means that from now on the game will be played with “only one pair of goal-posts”.

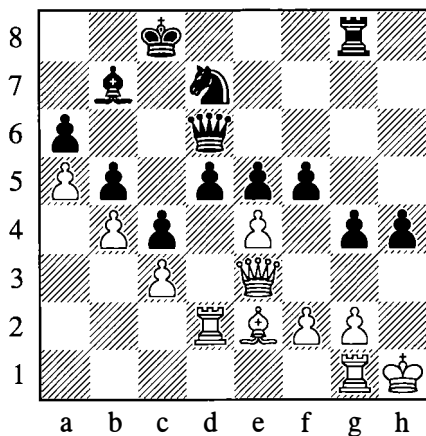
19.♖h1 ♜dg8 20.♞g1 ♞g4 21.♞d2 ♜hg8
22.a5 b5 23.♞ad1 ♔f8 24.♟h2 ♟xe5
25.♟xg4 hxg4 26.e4

The idea of 26...dxe4 27.♔xe5 ♖xe5 28.♖d8# can hardly be called a trap – it is too obvious. White's last move can therefore be regarded as an attempt to open at least some file or other for a rook.

26...♔d6 27.♖e3 ♟d7 28.♔xd6 ♖xd6
29.♞d4

It looks as if some serious hopes have arisen for White – the g4-pawn is threatened.

29...e5 30.♞d2 f5!



31.exd5

Here 31.exf5 ♟f6 32.♖h6 was a shade better. But even so, with 32...♖d8 followed by 33...♞h8, Black would maintain a superb attacking position. We may note that the threat to push the d-pawn in conjunction with ...h4-h3 would be hanging over White like the sword of Damocles. Now at least the bishop on b7 is shut out.

31...f4 32.♖e4 ♟f6 33.♖f5† ♖b8 34.f3

A cute variation is 34.♖e6 ♖xe6 35.dxe6 ♟e4, threatening 36...♟xf2† and 37...g3#!

34...♔c8 35.♖b1 g3 36.♞e1 h3 37.♔f1 ♞h8
38.gxh3 ♔xh3 39.♖g1 ♔xf1 40.♖xf1 e4
41.♖d1 ♟g4 42.fxg4 f3 43.♞g2

Unhappy rook! It was no use to its own army, and now in despair it sacrifices itself without rescuing anything.

43...fxg2†

White resigned.

0-1

GAME 76

Tigran Petrosian – Boris Spassky

Moscow (10) 1966

Notes by Boleslavsky

1.♖f3 ♘f6 2.g3 g6

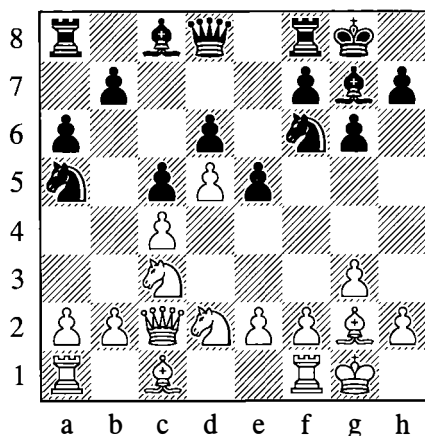
For the first time in the match Spassky chooses the King's Indian, which shows he is going after a sharp struggle.

3.c4 ♗g7 4.♗g2 0–0 5.0–0 ♘c6 6.♘c3 d6 7.d4 a6 8.d5 ♘a5 9.♘d2 c5 10.♞c2 e5

The play up to here has followed familiar patterns, and the players took little time over the opening.

At this point Spassky avoids the theoretical move 10...♞b8. In my view, this early blocking of the bishop on g7 does not harmonize with stationing the knight on a5.

White now has plenty of freedom in his choice of plans.



11.b3

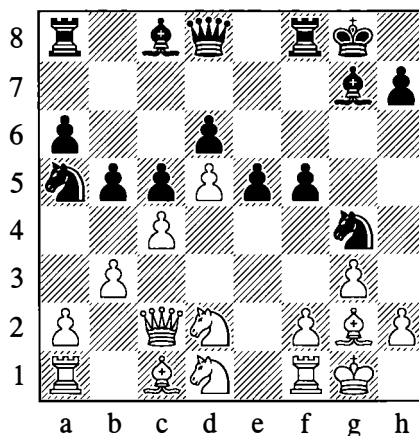
This continuation is the best answer to 10...♞b8, but here it is not energetic enough. White should play 11.a3 b6 12.b4 ♘b7 13.♞b1. In that case, since Black has weakened

the b6-point, White could very well count on achieving success on the queenside.

11...♘g4 12.e4

As White is sticking to defensive tactics on the queenside, he must seek counterplay on the other wing.

12...f5 13.exf5 gxf5 14.♘d1 b5



15.f3?

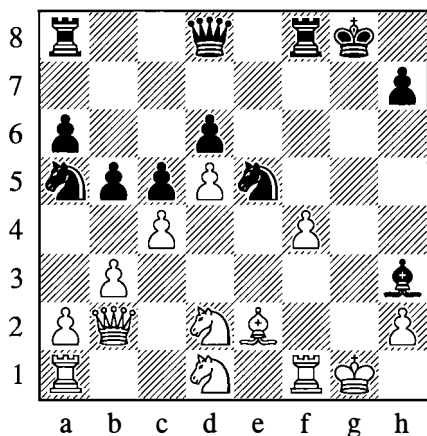
Hastily played, allowing Black to seize the initiative. White should have played a preliminary 15.♗b2. Then after (for example) 15...♞b8 16.f3 ♘f6 17.♗c3 ♗h6 18.♞e1 he could gradually improve the placing of his pieces, while it wouldn't be easy for Black to find an active plan. The play now becomes sharp, but by no means in a way that favours White.

15...e4! 16.♗b2 exf3 17.♗xf3 ♗xb2 18.♞xb2 ♘e5 19.♗e2 f4! 20.gxf4

Black also has a good game after 20.♞xf4 ♞xf4 21.gxf4 ♘g6 22.♘e4 ♘xf4 23.♘f2 ♞a7.

20...♗h3?

Black overrates his position, and the scenario changes suddenly and drastically. The simple 20...♞xf4 would have been good. After 21.♘e3 ♞g5† 22.♗h1 ♞xf1† 23.♘dxf1 ♞a7, White would be facing a struggle for the draw.



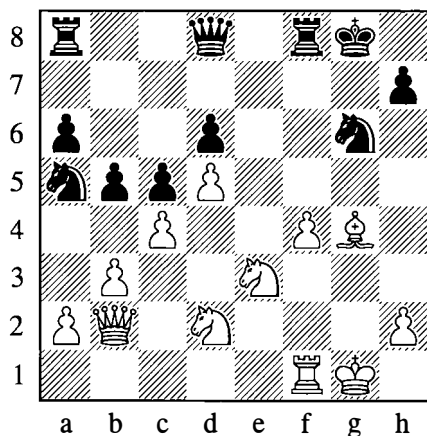
21. Qe3! Qxf1

This time, the capture on f4 would have unpleasant consequences. For example: 21...Rxf4 22.Rxf4 Bg5† 23.Bg4! Qxg4 24.Qxg4 Qxg4 25.Qxg4 Bxg4† 26.Qh1 Bxd4 27.Bg1† Qh8 28.Bxd4 cxd4 29.Bg4, and Black has a very difficult endgame.

22. Rxf1 Qg6

It would have been better to withdraw the knight to d7 and meet 23.Qg4 with 23...Bf6; resistance would then have been possible.

23. Qg4

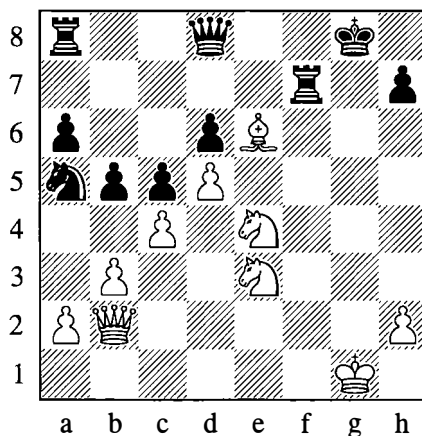


23... Qxf4?

Black has lost the thread, and succumbs within a few moves. Of course, 23...Rxf4

24.Qe6† Qf8 25.Rxf4† Qxf4 26.Bh8† would also be bad for him. It was imperative to play 23...Bf6. Admittedly, after 24.Qe6† Qh8 25.Bxf6† Rxf6 26.f5 White would have a large plus, but a lengthy struggle would still lie ahead.

24. Rxf4! Rxf4 25. Qe6† Bf7 26. Qe4



A picturesque position. Black is helpless in spite of being two exchanges up. His knight on a5 passively witnesses the annihilation of his army.

26... Bh4

If 26...Ba7 27.Qf5 Bf8, then 28.Bf6 is simplest.

27. Qxd6 Bg5†

Or 27...Be1† 28.Qg2 Bxe3 29.Qxf7† Qf8 30.Bh8† Qe7 31.Qf5† Qxf7 32.Bg7† and 33.Qxe3.

28. Qh1 Ba7 29. Qxf7† Rxf7 30. Bh8†!

A spectacular concluding stroke! Black resigned.

1-0

GAME 77

Tigran Petrosian – Boris Spassky

Moscow (12) 1966

Notes by Boleslavsky

1.♠f3 g6 2.c4 ♗g7 3.d4 d6 4.♠c3 ♠d7 5.e4 e6

Up to here there was no reason to doubt that the players were going into one of the systems of the King's Indian Defence, but this last move of Spassky's shows he aims to diverge from the theoretical lines. The challenger opts for a formation frequently employed by the Czech master Ujtelky. As yet, "Ujtelky's Opening" is not formally recognized by theory, so for the present it *is* to be regarded as one of the branches of the King's Indian. In general terms, Black's game plan is to arrange his pieces and pawns on the back three ranks and avoid contact with the enemy for as long as possible, thus allowing White an advantage in space. Against slow play by White, such a plan may be justified. In adopting this formation, Spassky evidently took into account both his opponent's style and the situation in the match.

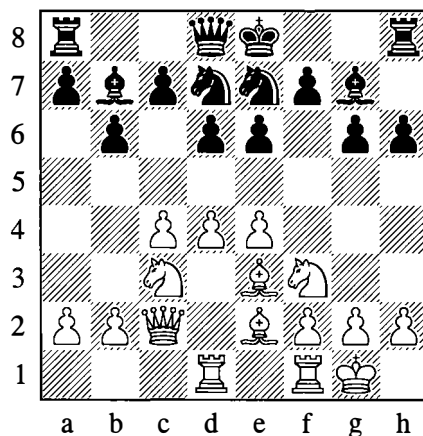
6.♗e2

In the event of 6.d5, White would have to reckon with 6...♗xc3† 7.bxc3 e5. After that, it would be up to him to prove that the challenger's lack of a dark-squared bishop was a more significant factor than the immobility of the white queenside pawns.

6...b6 7.0-0 ♗b7 8.♗e3 ♠e7 9.♖c2 h6 10.♙ad1

From the viewpoint of general strategic principles, nothing can be said against this move. The rook in the centre may prove useful

– if, of course, the game opens up. But the defect of the move is just that it *is*, so to speak, played from general considerations, without regard for a concrete plan. On the other hand if White continues with 10.d5 e5 (Black is forced to make this advance, as opening the game would be ruinous for him) 11.♠d2 f5 12.f3 0-0 13.b4, there is every chance that his attack will be faster than that of his opponent.



10...0-0 11.d5

By closing the centre, White ensures that his opponent's scope for action is confined to the ...f7-f5 break, against which he has a suitable antidote.

11...e5 12.♖c1

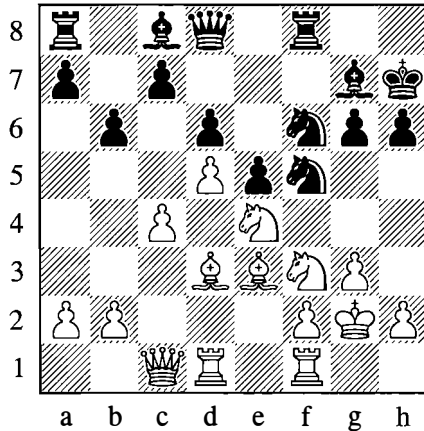
White aims to draw the enemy king onto h7. Then his light-squared bishop will be particularly strongly placed on d3.

12...♗h7 13.g3! f5

Black is probably right to carry out this break before White posts a knight on h4. In his annotations to the game Leonid Shamkovich recommended 13...a5 14.♠h4 ♠c5. But there would follow 15.♖c2 ♗c8 16.♗h1, and if 16...f5 then 17.exf5. The recapture 17...gxf5 would be unpleasantly answered by 18.f4, while in the event of 17...♠xf5 Black would have to reckon with 18.♠xg6 ♗xg6 19.g4.

14.exf5 ♖xf5

Better than 14...gxf5 15.♖h4! ♖f6 16.f4.

15.♔d3 ♔c8 16.♗g2 ♖f6 17.♖e4**17...♖h5**

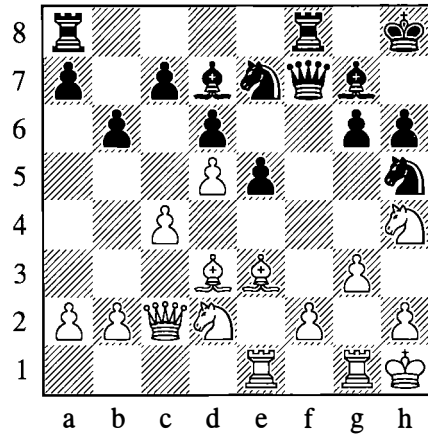
On f5 and h5 the knights are badly positioned and will sooner or later come under attack from the g-pawn. It was worth considering 17...♗d7, aiming at h3. The simplifying line recommended by Shamkovich, 17...♖xe4 18.♔xe4 ♖xe3† 19.♗xe3! ♔f5, can hardly be to Black's satisfaction. Petrosian would evidently have continued 20.♖h4! ♗f6 21.♔d3 ♔ae8 22.♗e2, after which the threat of 23.♗f3 compels Black to exchange the light-squared bishops.

18.♔d2 ♔d7 19.♗h1 ♖e7

White was threatening 20.g4. Black would have done better to admit his mistake and withdraw the other knight to f6.

20.♖h4! ♔h3

Spassky drives the rook away from its post, but on g1 this piece later proves to be performing an immense service to White.

21.♗g1 ♔d7 22.♔e3 ♗e8 23.♗de1 ♗f7 24.♗c2 ♗h8 25.♖d2!

The storm-clouds over Black's position are thickening. The point g6 urgently needs protection.

25...♖f5

Not 25...♗h7 in view of 26.g4 ♖f6 27.g5 with an irresistible attack.

26.♖xf5 gxf5

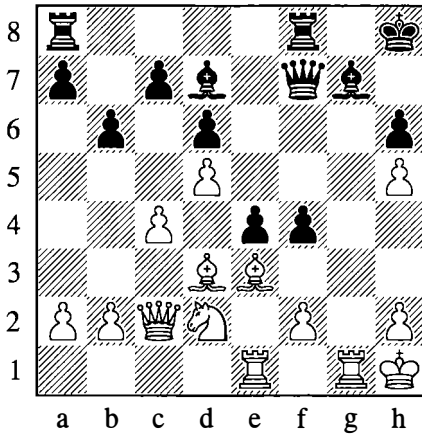
Recapturing with the bishop would lead to simplification that favours White: after 26...♔xf5 27.♔xf5 ♗xf5 (27...gxf5 28.g4! is even more unpleasant for Black) 28.♗xf5 gxf5 29.g4! fxe4 (29...♖f4 30.♔xf4 exf4 31.gxf5 ♗xf5 is not good, owing to 32.♗e6!) 30.♗xe4, a difficult struggle for the draw would lie ahead for Black.

27.g4! e4

This move leads to a lost position. But what choice is there? On 27...♖f4, White could transpose to a line in the previous note that was shown to be bad for Black. The answer to 27...f4 would be 28.♔g6 ♗f6 (28...♗e7 29.♔d4! ♖f6 30.f3 is utterly dismal) 29.♔xh5 fxe3 30.fxe3, and the resulting position promises Black nothing good – for example 30...e4 31.b3 ♗c3 32.♗d1 ♗e5 33.♗g2 ♔e8 34.g5. Thus the continuation in the game may be considered Black's best practical chance.

28.gxh5 f4!

Of course 28...exd3? 29.♖xd3 ♖xh5 30.♗d4 31.♘f3! is bad for Black.



Now both bishops are *en prise*. The dark-squared one has nowhere to go, and the natural thing would seem to be to capture on e4 with the other bishop or the knight. In either case complex play would ensue, with counter-chances for Black – just what Spassky has been striving for!

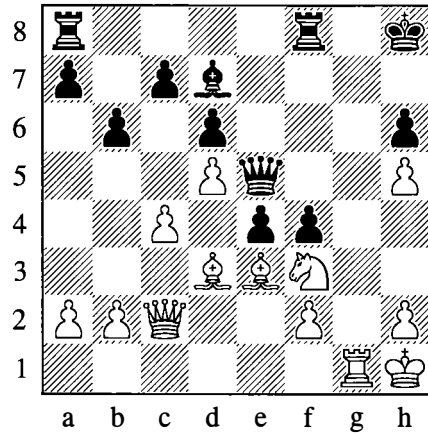
29.♖xg7!

The position after 29.♗e4 fxe3 30.♖xe3 ♖xh5 is worth pondering. The bishop on g7 has finally “started work”, and Black aims to station it on e5. In these circumstances the exchange sacrifice on g7 is inadequate, as a check on the diagonal can be blocked by the black queen.

29...♖xg7 30.♖g1 ♖e5

The black queen can only move away along the diagonal. Black can save himself neither by 30...♗g4, on account of 31.♖xg4 ♖xg4 32.♗d4† ♖g8 33.♗xe4 with a material plus and an attack for White, nor by 30...exd3 31.♖xd3 ♖xg1† 32.♖xg1 fxe3 33.♖xe3 ♖g8† 34.♖h1 ♖h7 35.♗e4 ♖af8 36.♖d4. In this last line, instead of 31...♖xg1†, Black may play 31...♗f5, but he is still completely helpless after 32.♖xg7 ♗xd3 33.♗d4.

31.♘f3!



Revenge for move 28! Three white pieces are *en prise* but Black's position is lost.

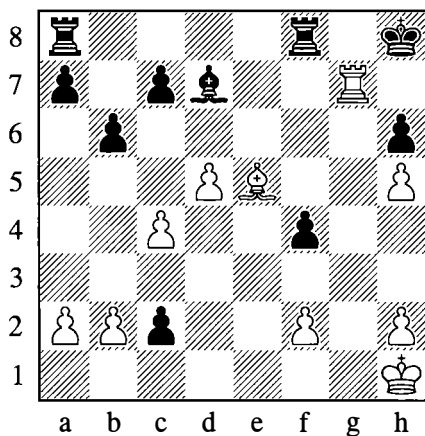
31...exd3

Black's last hope. If instead 31...exf3, then 32.♗d2.

32.♗xe5?

At this point many people noticed that 32.♖xd3! was the winning move. Black's only answer is 32...♗f5, but then comes 33.♗xe5! ♗xd3 34.♗d4!. Now 34...dxe5 is hopeless for Black on account of 35.♗xe5† ♖h7 36.♖g7† ♖h8 37.♖xc7† ♖g8 38.♖g7† ♖h8 39.♖xa7† ♖g8 40.♖g7† ♖h8 41.♖g3† ♖h7 42.♖xd3 ♖xa2 43.♖g2, and White's 3 pawns for the exchange ensure him a fairly simple win. Petrosian saw this variation, but was confused by Black's possibility of checking with 34...♗e4† (instead of 34...dxe5). Then 35.f3 would be met by 35...♖h7!, after which 36.fxe4 dxe5 37.♗xe5 ♖f7 gives an unclear position that would be difficult to play when short of time. Under fatigue from the foregoing complex struggle, the World Champion failed to notice that in answer to 34...♗e4† he could have blocked one check with another: 35.♗f3†.

32...dxc2 33.♔d4! dxe5 34.♔xe5† ♕h7
35.♖g7† ♕h8 36.♖f7† ♕g8 37.♖g7† ♕h8



38.♖g6†?

In the time scramble the World Champion didn't realize he was bringing about a threefold repetition of the position. And yet he would have been risking nothing if he had made the moves 38.♖xd7† ♕g8 39.♖g7† ♕h8 40.♖xc7† ♕g8 41.♖g7† ♕h8 at lightning speed, and then adjourned the game. Analysis "at home" would have established whether he should carry on the fight or settle for repetition. In our view, the continuation 42.♖xa7† ♕g8 43.♖g7† ♕h8 44.♖g1† ♕h7 45.♖c1 would have given White quite good chances of winning. For example: 45...♖ae8 46.♔c3, and now 46...♖e2 47.♕g2 f3† 48.♕g3 ♖f7 49.b3 ♖e8 50.h4, or 46...f3 47.♖xc2 ♖e2 48.♖xe2 fxe2 49.♕g2 ♕g8 50.d6; White trades his d-pawn for the black e-pawn, and it is doubtful whether Black can draw.

38...♕h7 39.♖g7†

Draw.

½–½

GAME 78

Tigran Petrosian – Boris Spassky

Moscow (20) 1966

Notes by V. Simagin

Can a World Championship match be compared to a cycle race over many days? I think there is a grain of truth in this comparison. At any rate, the marathon distance of these contests creates exceptionally difficult conditions for the participants.

The Grandmasters are tired, but they need to be highly alert. One second, one wrong move in a particular game, and the damage is very hard to repair. In a match like this you cannot simply play chess, without painstaking preparation. The contestants have to draw up their strategy for the match as a whole as well as for each individual encounter.

This game was played in peculiar psychological circumstances. For the first time since the 7th game, the challenger had succeeded in levelling the match score. The situation had changed, and the players' plans also changed. Preparation for this clash was immensely important, as the result of any one of the final few games could decide the outcome of the entire match.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4

For the first time in the match, this popular opening is played. Devotees of chess theory can rejoice: at last the players have chosen an opening in which some variations have been worked out virtually as far as the endgame!

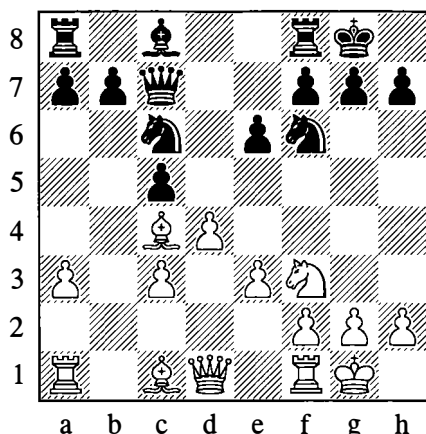
In this match Spassky was quite often censured for playing wholly unusual opening schemes. But in the present case, was he doing the right thing by switching the game to a quiet positional track? Was a certain amount of complacency involved here, after his success

in game 19? It is well known, after all, that the World Champion feels very much at home in just the kind of simple situations that quite often arise from Nimzo-Indian lines.

4.e3 0–0 5.♔d3 c5 6.♘f3 d5 7.0–0 ♖c6

In the contests of the last few years, the continuation 7...dxc4 8.♔xc4 ♘bd7 has been seen more often.

8.a3 ♔xc3 9.bxc3 dxc4 10.♔xc4 ♖c7



A few years ago this continuation was very popular, but it is gradually going out of use. The abundant practical tests have shown that White preserves a small but clear positional advantage.

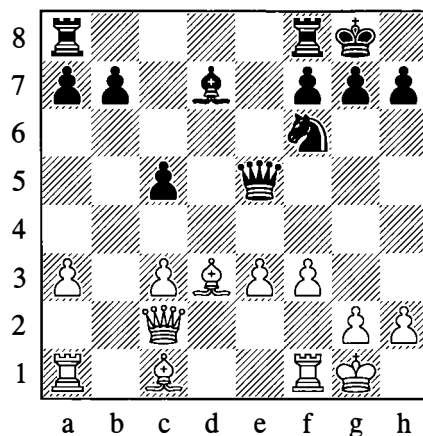
After Spassky had made his move, the theorists pricked up their ears. “The challenger’s choosing a variation that’s well known but not entirely satisfactory. That means we can expect an innovation that’ll alter the verdict on the position.”

11.♔d3 e5 12.♖c2 ♔g4

Other playable continuations are 12...♖e7, 12...♗d8 and 12...♗e8. Of these, 12...♗e8 is considered by theorists to be Black’s best. As a sample of the correct play, they cite the game Gligoric – Filip, Portoroz 1958: 12...♗e8 13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♖xe5 15.f3 ♔d7

16.a4 ♔c6 17.e4 ♗ad8 18.♔c4 b6 19.♔d2 ♗d7. But then, in my view, White still has the advantage here.

13.♘xe5 ♘xe5 14.dxe5 ♖xe5 15.f3 ♔d7



The diagram position had undoubtedly been studied by both opponents before the start of the match. It had been seen in a game Geller – Spassky, Amsterdam 1956, which continued 16.♗e1 ♔a4! 17.♖b2 ♗ad8 18.♔f1 b6 19.c4 ♗fe8 20.♖xe5 ♗xe5 21.e4 ♘d7 22.♔b2 ♗e6 23.e5 ♘b8 24.♔e2 ♘c6, with good possibilities for Black. Later, in a number of games White played 16.e4.

Spassky can hardly have been counting on a repetition of his game with Geller, but against 16.e4 he may have had an improvement ready. At this point, however, Petrosian is the first to take the game away from the beaten track.

16.a4

In a classical variation like this, an individual move cannot play a decisive role, but in any case a new continuation has a distinct psychological impact.

16...♗fe8

It was worth considering 16...c4! 17.♔xc4 (better than 17.♔e2 ♘d5) 17...♗ac8!, with chances of equalizing.

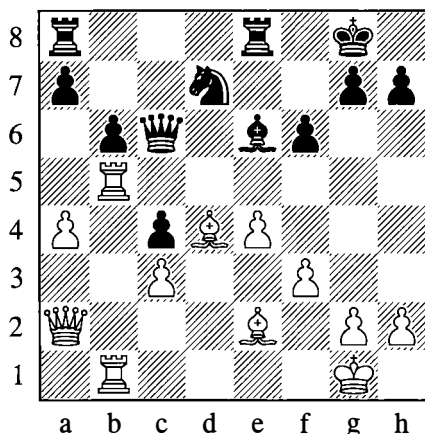
17.e4

What should Black play? The threat is 18.f4 and 19.e5. The answer to 17...♖c7 or 17...♗e7 can be 18.c4! with advantage to White.

17...c4 18.♗e2 ♗e6

A considerably better move was 18...♗c5†.

**19.♗e3 ♖c7 20.♖ab1 ♘d7 21.♖b5 b6
22.♖fb1 ♖c6 23.♗d4 f6 24.♗a2**



In consequence of Black's unfortunate opening, White has obtained a highly promising position. Black is condemned to passive defence and must await White's offensive.

24...♙h8 25.♗f1 h6 26.h3 ♖ab8 27.a5 ♖b7

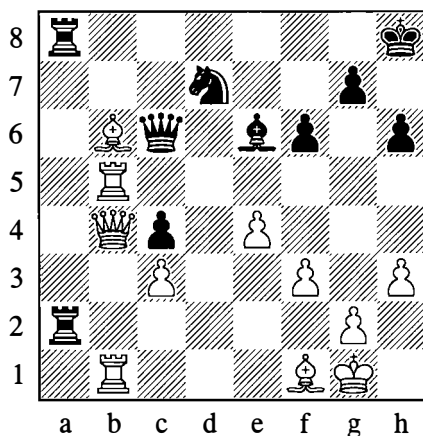
Many annotators have recommended 27...a6. But in that case, after 28.♖xb6 ♘xb6 29.axb6 ♗b7 30.♗a5, Black's situation is forlorn.

28.axb6 axb6 29.♗f2?

An inaccuracy, enabling Black to obtain counter-chances. White is conceding the open a-file to his opponent. This was probably the result of an oversight. At any rate the immediate 29.♗b2 was better, for example: 29...♖a8 30.♗b4 ♖ba7 31.♗xb6 ♖a3 32.♗d4 ♖b3 33.♖xb3 cxb3 34.c4!.

29...♖a8 30.♗b2 ♖ba7! 31.♗xb6 ♖a2

There was another possibility, involving 31...♖a3. If then 32.♗f2, Black has 32...♖b3 33.♖xb3 cxb3 34.c4 ♖b8, and saving chances arise for him.

32.♗b4**32...♖c2?**

At this stage 32...♖2a3 no longer achieves its aim, for example: 33.♗d4 ♖b3 34.♖xb3 cxb3 35.c4. However, 32...♖8a3 deserved serious consideration.

A notable possibility was pointed out by Alexander Nikitin: 32...♖2a4 33.♗e7 ♖b8 34.♖5b2 ♖aa8 35.♗d4 ♖e8 36.♗b4 ♖eb8 37.♗xb8† ♖xb8 38.♖xb8† ♘xb8 39.♖xb8† ♙h7 40.♖b6, with a minimal plus for White (though instead of 35.♗d4 he could have played 35.♗c7!).

33.♗f2 ♗c7

Or 33...♖aa2 34.♗g3.

34.♗e7 ♗xh3

Black's situation is already hopeless, so the challenger cannot be blamed for attempting a desperate attack.

**35.gxh3 ♖xf2 36.♙xf2 ♗h2† 37.♗g2 ♘e5
38.♖b8† ♖xb8 39.♖xb8† ♙h7 40.♖d8 ♘g6**

41. ♖e6

Black resigned. Spassky's choice of opening variation had proved unsuccessful and had led to defeat in a game of great importance to him.

1–0

The chief editor of the magazine *Chess in the USSR*, Grandmaster Averbakh, met with Petrosian on the day after the 22nd game. The match with Spassky was still continuing. But the main thing was clear: Petrosian would retain the supreme title of World Champion for another three years.

“Commentators have noted that you were well prepared for this match. Could you tell us about your preparation in more detail?”

“I began preparing for the match long before it started. Spassky hadn't yet sat down to play his Candidates final match with Tal when I was already working together with my coach on a comprehensive plan for preparation. As a first stage we studied my own games, trying to take an outsider's view of them. When the Spassky – Tal match was in progress I made a special trip to Tbilisi to observe my future rival a little, whichever of them it might be. Once it became clear that Spassky was winning, I came back to Moscow and set about studying his play. This took quite a long time. It was only afterwards that I began preparing myself for the forthcoming twenty-four games. I worked out an opening repertoire, and tactics for conducting the match. About a month before the start date, I stopped occupying myself with chess, deciding to have a proper rest before the duel.”

“Botvinnik once said that the challenger is always better prepared from the practical point of view than the Champion. Do you agree with that?”

“I agree that in earning his right to a match with the World Champion, the challenger undergoes some good practical schooling –

he receives some enviable training. But at the same time he wears himself out, physically and with the strain on his nerves. I understood that I might turn out to be worse trained and less in practice than Spassky. So for training purposes I played in the Yerevan international tournament, the Moscow – Leningrad match, the Moscow Team Championship and the specially organized Grandmaster tournament. In all these contests I pursued the training aims that were necessary to me; I tried to bring the defects of my own play to light.

“In the struggle at the chessboard it's important to keep a clear head for five hours and not tire yourself out. This means that if you want to achieve success, you have to be rational: play at your ease, conserve your strength, don't get into acute time trouble. I could list quite a few highly talented masters – I would call them tragic cases – who haven't managed to show everything that they are capable of, as a result of not apportioning their energies sensibly.

“What can you say about the match itself?”

“In the first game I missed an excellent chance to gain the advantage. This affected me so much that I played the next two games too nervously, under the influence of my error. The ending of the second game was nowhere near as simple as it seemed to some commentators. I would like to point out the great stubbornness and ingenuity that Spassky displayed in defence.

“I regard the seventh game as my best achievement in the match. It demonstrates the art of chess as I conceive it: restriction of the opponent's possibilities; a strategy embracing the whole board; encirclement of the enemy king, and the gradual tightening of the ring round it.

“From my point of view the match had two critical moments. The first was after the twelfth game, in which I played a beautiful

combination but didn't carry it through to the end. I must explain that the finish of the game took place in severe time trouble, and I forgot about the possibility of threefold repetition. This left me in a state of shock. It may even have been my nerves that gave me a bad throat. So I took a time-out. But evidently while I was recovering, Spassky was summoning up his strength, he pulled himself together after the adversities of the first half of the match and he inflicted defeat on me in game 13.

"In themselves, losses don't bother me all that much – I worry more about *how* I lost. And I lost *that* game twice. On resuming after the adjournment, I succeeded in reaching a drawn position, but again I went wrong in time trouble.

"As a result I conducted the next game, the fourteenth (which was played on the following day) in a demoralized state. It was only under the threat of a new defeat that I managed to brace myself and hold the balance in the adjournment session. This was a very difficult game, but it restored my faith in my own powers.

"The second critical moment for me was after the 19th game. I had lost it in time trouble. To a certain extent this defeat was accidental. And although the match situation had become more acute, the loss affected me for the better – it compelled me to summon up my powers for the decisive final clashes."

"What would you like to say about Spassky?"

"The commentators consider that in our match Spassky didn't display all that he was capable of. As Botvinnik put it, Spassky didn't manage to 'program himself for Petrosian' in the proper way. Still, Botvinnik in his time didn't manage that either. A match is a clash of two personalities. And the 'programming' doesn't depend on just one of the contestants. "I agree with Botvinnik that going to the Christmas tournament at Hastings wasn't the

best way for Spassky to prepare himself. It seems to me that the results of the Candidates matches had some part to play in making him rather underestimate the forthcoming duel. After his brilliant victories over Keres, Geller and Tal, it's evident that Boris Spassky believed in his destiny and decided that everything would carry on, so to speak, from inertia."

"Are you very tired after the match?"

"I'm tired of course, but I think I was more tired after the match with Botvinnik. But then perhaps I've simply got used to playing in match conditions."

"What do you think of the opening experiments that Spassky employed in the second half of the match?"

"It's possible to play that way; whether you need to is another question. It was evidently because of his troubles that Spassky started avoiding fashionable opening systems. But once he had set off on that route, I had to come to terms with it. You'll be interested to know that in the course of preparing for the 22nd game we anticipated that Spassky might answer 1.d4 with 1...b5."

"Some commentators have asserted that in this match the defence was stronger than the attack. Do you agree?"

"Not entirely. It's a feature of modern chess. In our time, some highly sophisticated means of defence have been worked out: prophylactic anticipation of the attack; retreating behind impregnable lines in good time; various methods of relieving the position; sacrificing pawns to reach drawn endgames; and so on. These days, playing to win against an opponent equal in strength demands a vast amount of pre-game preparation and deeply thought-out battle tactics."

And then the extremely difficult match was at an end. Petrosian had won the World Championship twice over. One of his first interviews following the match was published in the *Soviet Sport* newspaper.

“Can you please explain who you are? You have always been considered very much an adherent of positional play, an outstanding master of defence. Now, it seems, many people have ‘discovered’ combinative talent in the World Champion.”

“All this is very, very far from simple. If it’s true that the style is the man, then everyone plays in the way nature prescribes for him. Caution is inherent in my own nature, I don’t generally like situations that involve risk.

“But – and here is where the paradox lies – I have never had to complain about my combinative vision! In general terms, though this will seem strange to many people, I consider that everything in chess rests on tactics. If strategy is the block of marble, then tactics is the chisel with which a master operates to create a work of chess art.

“It may be that tactical skill is just what holds me back from many combinations, as I can find the rejoinders for my opponents.

“Yes, perhaps I do like defending more than attacking, but who has ever proved that defence is a more dangerous and risky occupation than attack? When a player is defending his fortifications against an assault, isn’t he walking on the edge of a precipice? Doesn’t that kind of play demand courage? And haven’t many games entered the treasure-house of chess art precisely on account of a virtuoso defence?”

“Can you succinctly formulate your chess credo? What do you value above all else in chess?”

“Logic! I am deeply convinced that although chess remains a game, there is nothing accidental in it. And that is my credo. I love only those games where I have played in accordance with the demands of logic. I believe

only in logical, ‘correct’ play.”

Commenting on the World Champion’s next appearances, Yuri Averbakh remarked:

“But just when Petrosian had reached the peak of glory for the second time, he suddenly felt that this had worn him out, that it was a constant effort to carry on the titanic struggle for the right to be considered the world’s number one chessplayer. And his results went somewhat into decline.”

* * *

This time, Petrosian’s showing in the Piatigorsky Cup, following a victorious World Championship match, was a failure. The Santa Monica tournament took place a month and a half after the match, and its participants – including Robert Fischer, the “pretender in the wings” – were naturally in the centre of attention. But already after the first cycle – in which Petrosian lost to Larsen and Portisch, while Spassky scored three wins with no defeats – it became clear that the World Champion had not managed to replenish his energy. The final top scores – Spassky first, Fischer second – were a reflection of the true distribution of forces in the fight for the chess crown. As for Petrosian, his mediocre result – a share of 6th-7th places – did a World Champion no credit. In an interview after the tournament, Spassky was asked, “What is the reason for Petrosian’s unsuccessful performance?” He replied: “As I see it, discovering the reason for a successful or unsuccessful performance isn’t a complicated matter. But is it always worth doing? Any Grandmaster has ups and downs in his path, successes and failures. Often a failure in one contest serves as a good springboard for future successes. Of course Petrosian could have played a good deal better. As to why he failed, I think the chief culprit was fatigue after the Championship match. This testifies once more that gaining the chess crown is not easy!”

GAME 79

Miguel Najdorf – Tigran Petrosian

Santa Monica 1966

Notes by Tigran Petrosian
and Miguel Najdorf

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 c5 4.d5 d6 5.♘c3
♙g7 6.♙g2 0-0 7.♘f3

The players have gone into the Yugoslav Variation of the King's Indian Defence. I prefer developing the knight on f3 rather than h3 (Benko), since it retains more possibilities for manoeuvring: ♘d2 or ♘f3-e1-c2. [M.N.]

7...♘a6 8.0-0 ♘c7 9.a4

Essential, since practice has demonstrated the strength of the ...b7-b5 advance, even when it costs Black a pawn. [M.N.]

9...♝b8 10.h3

White proceeds slowly. It would be better to start preparing b2-b4 by means of ♘f3-e1-c2 and ♝b1. My plan is faulty, since a break in the centre without preparation plays into Black's hands. [M.N.]

10...b6

This move looks like a loss of time, but 10...a6 would be met by 11.a5. Ever since the game Petrosian – Filip, Zagreb 1965, in which the Czech Grandmaster obtained excellent play, I have very much liked 10...b6. [T.P.]

11.e4 a6 12.e5

Fearing an immediate break on the queenside, I take an incorrect decision. It was still possible to play 12.♘d2 and avoid compromising my position in the centre. [M.N.]

12...♘d7

This makes White release the tension at once. Black has nothing to be afraid of, and the option of breaking with ...b6-b5 will not go away.

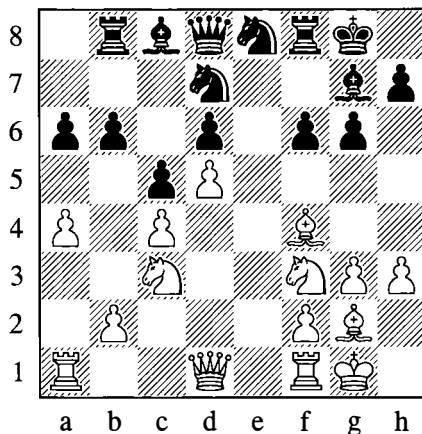
13.exd6 exd6 14.♙g5

After the natural 14...♘f6, the position of the bishop on g5 doesn't bring White any rosy prospects. However, after lengthy deliberation I settled for a different move that leads to a complex struggle. [T.P.]

14...f6

This move has only one drawback visible to the naked eye: it weakens the point e6. But there is no way for the white minor pieces to reach this square. [T.P.]

15.♙f4 ♘e8



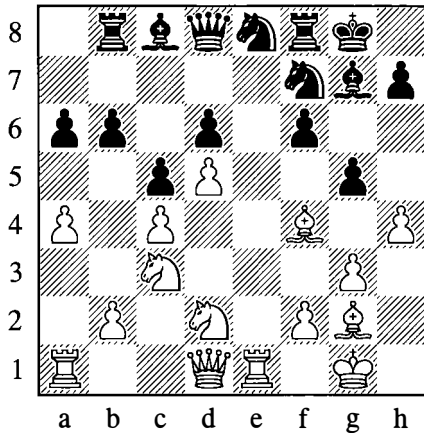
A typical Petrosian position, in which his strategic mastery is revealed. Black has managed to take firm possession of the e5-square, although to this end he has had to play ...f7-f6. [M.N.]

An essential link in Black's plan. He is preparing to bring his other knight to f7. The e5-square is an excellent springboard, but located in a "minefield". Black is able to reach it only after taking the necessary precautions. [T.P.]

16.h4

Endeavouring to hold up Black's ...g6-g5, I weaken my own kingside. This error results from an incorrect choice of plan. Black has an obvious advantage. [M.N.]

16...♠e5 17.♠d2 ♠f7 18.♠e1 g5



This game is uncommonly instructive in that without having made a single evident mistake, White has ended up in a wholly unpromising position. [T.P.]

19.hxg5 fxg5 20.♠e3 ♠e5 21.♠ce4 h6 22.♠a3 ♠g4

As a rule, if Black succeeds in exchanging a knight for White's dark-squared bishop in the King's Indian, this is a major achievement. The present game is no exception. [T.P.]

23.♠c1 ♠b7

Black continues to step up the pressure without forcing events. Unfortunately White can do nothing for the moment but wait. [M.N.]

24.♠f3 ♠bf7

Black is inconsistent in the pursuit of his plans. White manages to exchange off the enemy knight while preserving his own dark-squared bishop. Whatever the reservations,

White does have a good position, with control of the e4-point. [T.P.]

25.♠xg4 ♠xg4

The bishop pair emphasizes Black's advantage. [M.N.]

26.♠b1 a5

Black warily avoids an opening of lines on the queenside, reckoning that his preponderance on the other wing gives him sufficient advantage. [M.N., T.P.]

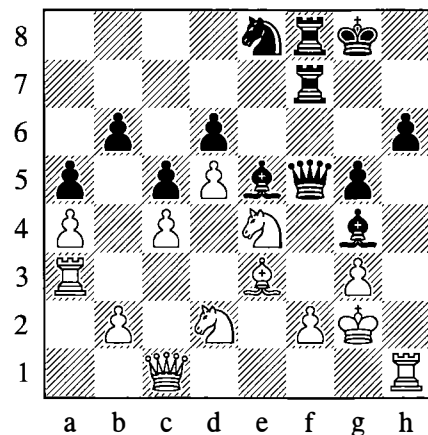
27.♠c1 ♠e5

After this, White succeeds in consolidating his position. A line that promised more was 27...♠f6 28.♠xf6 ♠xf6 29.♠b3 ♠g6 30.♠xb6 ♠h5. However, in this variation White isn't obliged to take the pawn – he may play 30.♠g2. [T.P.]

28.♠g2 ♠d7 29.♠h1 ♠f5

An obvious move that turns out to be mistaken. Petrosian has overlooked my next move. [M.N.]

Everything would seem to be in order. White can't play 30.♠xh6 on account of 30...♠f3†. Perhaps it was worth playing 29...♠f6 or directing the knight along the route e8-g7-f5 (h5).



30. ♖xg5!

This is the point! The f3-square, which has played such an important part in my calculations, turns out to be defended. [T.P.]

30...hxcg5 31.f3 ♘f6 32.fxcg4 ♖xcg4 33.♗d1 ♖xd1 34.♙xd1 ♘xe4 35.♘xe4

Black has a slight initiative, but it isn't easy for him to penetrate the white camp. However, since he just recently held the advantage, it's natural that Black should be trying to play for a win. [M.N.]

35...g4 36.♙d2 ♙d4

Black of course is not better, but the struggle continues in time trouble. [T.P.]

37.♙a1 ♙e7 38.♘f2

The position of my king was causing me anxiety; it would nonetheless have been better to play 38.♘xd6 followed by 39.♘b5. [M.N.]

38...♙e3 39.♘xcg4 ♙b3 40.♘h2 ♙b4

White has to do something to counter Black's initiative on the queenside. My mistake on move 38 has worsened my position and required me to play accurately. [M.N.]

41.♙e1

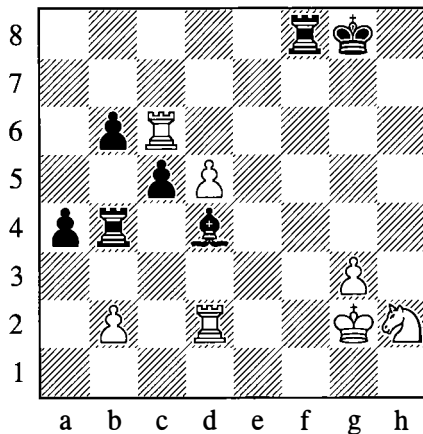
The sealed move. I decided to give up the c-pawn. [M.N.]

41...♙xc4 42.♙e6 ♙xa4

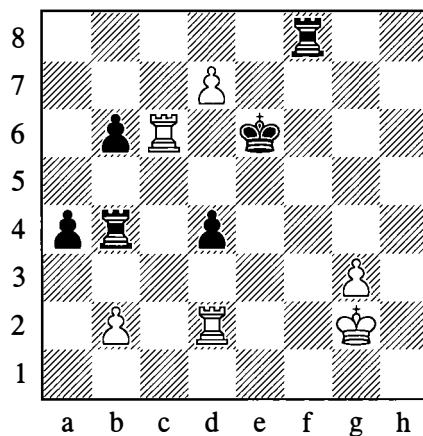
Adjournment analysis had revealed that the game ought to end in a draw. I examined 42.♙e4 ♙xa4 43.♙g4†, after which the black king cannot escape to the queenside (43...♙f7 44.♙f4† ♙e7 45.♙e2† wins). [T.P.]

43.♙xd6 ♙b4 44.♙c6 a4

After 44...♙xb2 45.d6 ♙a8, Black would have every chance of winning. [T.P.]

**45.d6**

A very tempting line here was 45.♘f3 ♙xb2 46.♙xb2 ♙xb2 47.♙xb6 a3 48.♙a6 c4 49.♘e1, with a good defence. However, the variations after 45...♙xb2 (instead of 45...♙xb2) are favourable to Black, for instance: 46.d6 a3 47.d7 ♙d8 48.♘g5 ♙c3 49.♙c8 ♙f6 50.♘e6 ♙b2 51.♙xb2 axb2 52.♙xd8† ♙xd8 53.♘xd8 b1=♙ 54.♘e6 ♙c2†, and Black wins. [M.N.]

45...♙f7 46.♘f3 ♙e6 47.♘xd4† cxd4 48.d7†

The pawn cannot be saved anyway, but White wants to cut the black king off along the 6th rank. [T.P.]

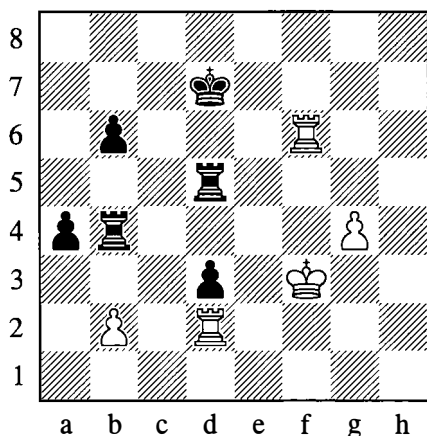
48...♙xd7

By surrendering the pawn White has activated his forces, but the endgame remains difficult for him all the same, as Black has great practical chances of winning. *[M.N.]*

49.♖h6 ♜f5 50.g4

This pawn will have the task of diverting Black's forces, neutralizing his advantage. *[M.N.]*

50...♞d5 51.♕f3 d3 52.♞f6



Black has a healthy extra pawn, but there would appear to be no direct way to convert it into a win. On the other hand, White's defence is not simple either. The position is complex, and in addition the players were in time trouble again. *[T.P.]*

52...b5 53.♞f4 ♜c4 54.♞e4 ♕c6 55.♕e3

It isn't clear how Black will be able to exploit his material plus.

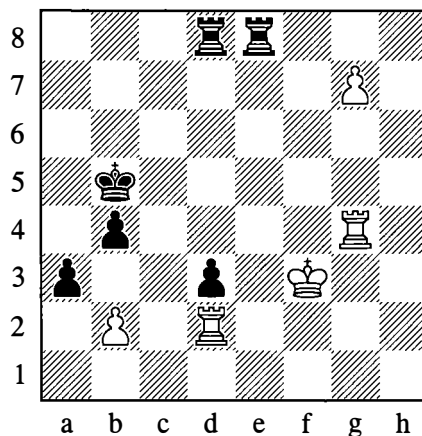
55...♞c2 56.g5 ♞c1

Exchanging the d-pawn for the g-pawn would be tantamount to agreeing a draw. *[T.P.]*

57.♞g4

At all events 57.♞d4 would be better, trying to get rid of the d3-pawn. *[T.P.]*

57...♞e1† 58.♕f2 ♞e8 59.g6 ♕c5 60.g7 ♞dd8 61.♕f3 b4 62.♕f2 ♕b5 63.♕f3 a3



64.bxa3?

A mistake due to fatigue. The right move was 64.b3!, after which no direct win is to be seen. *[M.N.]*

64...bxa3 65.♕f2 ♞g8 66.♕e3 ♞d7 67.♞xd3

If 67.♞a2, then 67...d2 68.♞xd2 ♞xd2 69.♕xd2 a2, as in the game. *[T.P.]*

67...♞xd3† 68.♕xd3 a2 69.♞g1 ♞xg7 70.♞a1 ♞g2 71.♕c3 ♕a4

White is just one tempo short! The fight is over – the black king has managed to shut off the path of its opposite number in time.

72.♞h1 ♕a3 73.♞f1 ♞g8 74.♞h1 ♞c8†

White resigned.

0–1

Notwithstanding some setbacks in tournaments, Petrosian acquitted himself extremely well when representing the Soviet team in the same period. At the Olympiad in Havana he registered a phenomenal result, not losing a single game and winning 10 of the 13 he played!

“Frankly speaking, I set off for the 17th Olympiad in a dejected mood,” Petrosian complained in an interview after the tournament ended. “The endless stream of contests had unsettled me. The match with Spassky, then almost immediately afterwards the tournament in Santa Monica (the result of which, as you know, gave me no joy), and just before the Olympiad, the Soviet Team Championship with its first-board tournament of leading Grandmasters.

“As long as our chess federation hasn’t devised a more rational calendar and you are virtually forced to take part in a race without a break, you have to think about how to conserve your competitive form for the most important events. Enemy number one is chess fatigue, which leads to routine thinking. And so in some particular games, in order to force my mind to work, I deliberately headed for positions that were not characteristic of my chess outlook. One such game in the Olympiad was my encounter with Martin Johansson, the master who led the Swedish players.”

GAME 80

Tigran Petrosian – Martin Johansson Sr

Havana (ol) 1966

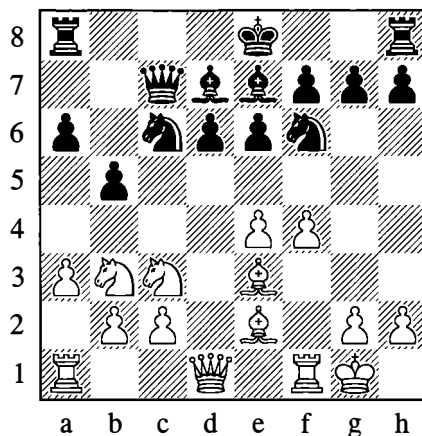
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6
5.♘c3 a6 6.♙e2

“A cautious move, characteristic of Petrosian’s style,” many annotators would observe. Indeed, 6.♙g5 is considered to be the “fashion”. However, the variations arising from that move have been so extensively analysed that strength of play ceases to be important – the game is turned into a contest for who has the better memory. This is what explains the choice of 6.♙e2.

6...e6 7.f4 ♘c6 8.♙e3 ♞c7 9.0–0 ♙d7 10.♘b3

One of the best answers to Black’s chosen Scheveningen set-up is acknowledged to be 10.♞e1. By contrast, 10.♘b3 is considered innocuous. As the reader will see, this judgement is unjust.

10...b5 11.a3 ♙e7



12.♞f2

White is planning a pawn storm on the kingside. However, Black has not yet castled. After Black’s ...0–0, the g2–g4 advance will gain considerably in strength. For the moment, White simply makes a useful move. The rook may help in the defence of c2. According to circumstances it may later go to d2, or else from g2 it may support the push with the g-pawn.

12...b4 13.axb4 ♘xb4 14.♙f3 ♞c8

White was threatening 15.e5.

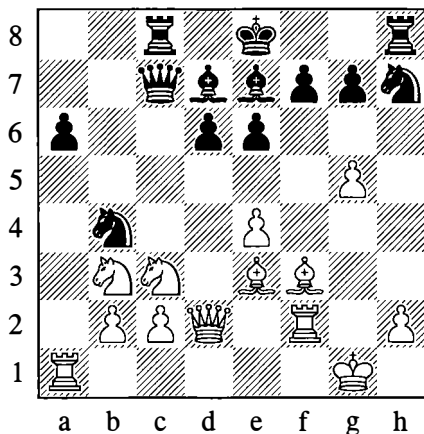
15.g4 h6

My opponent played this move after a long think. It doesn’t of course solve the problem of defence, but what *should* Black be advised to do? Castle, perhaps? No, he needed to do that earlier. It must be acknowledged that Black is already experiencing difficulties.

16.g5 hxg5 17.fxg5 ♘h7

Now a move that looked tempting was 18.♞d4, attacking the knight and the g7-pawn. But after 18...♙xg5 19.♙xg5 ♘xg5, Black is threatening to check on h3. If for instance 20.♞xb4, then 20...♘h3† 21.♙g2 ♘xf2 22.♙xf2 ♞xh2†, and Black has serious counterplay. On 20.♞xg7, the continuation would probably be 20...♘h3† and then 21.♙g2 ♙e7 or 21.♙f1 ♙e7 22.♙g4 ♘xf2. If instead White withdraws his bishop to g2, defending the h3-square (20.♙g2), Black plays 20...d5. True, after 21.♞xb4 ♞xh2† 22.♙f1 ♘h3 White could try to beat off the attack and keep his material plus, if he had no simpler course available.

18.♞d2



18...♘f8

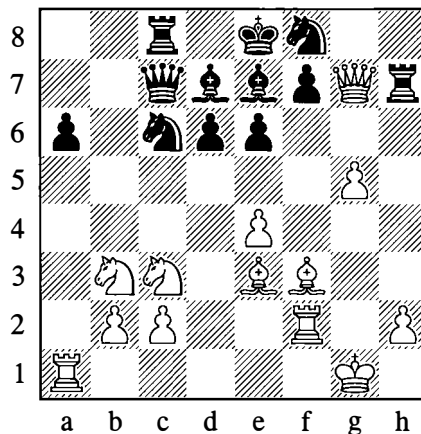
Comparatively speaking, Black's best decision would be to castle regardless. But he had avoided that move in the opening, and now that his kingside position was compromised, I could assume he would prefer a different move here.

With 18...0–0 Black would be removing his king to a relatively safe place (it wouldn't be so simple for White to bring his major pieces over to the h-file or otherwise attack the h7-point) and preserving resources for the defence. But now, organizing a defence is beyond the powers of the pieces bunched round the black king.

19.♞d4

In contrast to the variation in the note to move 17, the pawn on g5 is no longer under attack, and the forking blow against the knight on b4 and the pawn on g7 quickly settles the outcome of the fight.

19...♘c6 20.♞xg7 ♞h7



21.♞g8

White seems to have taken a highly committal decision – his queen is cut off inside the enemy camp. But the point is that Black is incapable of turning this fact to account. More than that – he is unable to defend against an attack on f7. The following line may serve as an amusing illustration of the strength of White's position: 21...♙d8 22.♞af1 (of course, 22.g6 fxg6 23.♙h5 is simplest) 22...♘e7 23.♞xh7! ♘h7 24.♙h5, and Black is helpless.

21...♘e5 22.♙e2

Unexpectedly, disaster strikes Black from the other wing.

22...♙c6 23.♞xa6 ♞d8 24.♞xc6! ♘xc6 25.♙b5

A "quiet" move, after which there is no defence against the twin threats of 26.♘d4 and 26.g6. Black therefore resigned.

With the exception of 18...♖f8 Black made no outright mistakes, and nonetheless he quickly lost. The fact is that the poor reputation of the opening scheme he selected is no accident. Such systems are usually employed when players discover new possibilities, a new plan. In this game, that was not the case. No counterplay emerged for Black on the queenside or in the centre, and the passive placing of the black pieces allowed White to work up a dangerous attack. And one other thing: I come to the conclusion that the move 1.e4 isn't all that bad. When opening with the queen's pawn, you don't often succeed in winning with the middlegame only just starting.

1-0

GAME 81

Bent Larsen – Tigran Petrosian

Havana (ol) 1966

Notes by I. Boleslavsky

1.e4 e6 2.♖f3 d5 3.♖c3

Grandmaster Larsen treats the French Defence in an unusual manner. Yet it isn't clear what advantage there is in bringing out the knights before the customary advance of the d-pawn.

3...♖f6

Another possibility is 3...d4 4.♖e2 c5 5.c3 ♖c6 6.cxd4 cxd4 7.♖g3 a6, with a good position for Black.

4.exd5 exd5 5.d4

This kind of opening play doesn't lead to an advantage. Larsen's way of playing simple positions is especially risky.

5...c6

Very passive. Black is developing his pieces in a way that allows an intrusion on e5 by his opponent's knight and grants the white pieces too much activity. A better line was 5...♗b4 6.♗d3 0-0 7.0-0 ♗g4, after which Black would have no troubles.

6.♗d3 ♗d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.♖e2!

On 8.♖e5 Black could play 8...♖bd7 9.♗f4 (9.f4 ♖b6) 9...♗c7, and White would have to let his knight on e5 be exchanged. But now the other white knight is heading for f5, and it isn't easy for Black to find anything to oppose against this plan.

8...♗e8 9.♖g3 ♖bd7

Of course 9...g6 would be bad on account of 10.♗g5, immediately highlighting Black's weakness on the dark squares.

10.♖f5 ♖f8

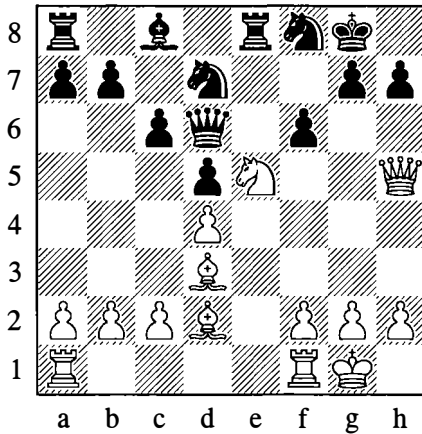
On general grounds it would make sense to retreat with the dark-squared bishop, but the white position would still remain menacing. The move in the game is refuted by White's thirteenth.

11.♖xd6 ♖xd6 12.♖e5 ♖d6d7

Black was aiming for this position when he made his 10th move. What is White to do? Exchanging on d7 would only suit Black; 13.f4 is undesirable in view of 13...♖f6 followed by 14...♖e4; while 13.♗f4 is met by 13...♖xe5!, and now 14.dxe5? ♖b4!, or 14.♗xe5 ♖h6 – which promises White little. Larsen, however, finds a very strong continuation.

13.♗d2! f6

After 13...♖xe5 14.dxe5, this pawn would be invulnerable: 14...♗xe5 fails to 15.♗e1, while 14...♗xe5 fails to 15.♗f4. In making this last move Black was hoping to eliminate the knight that had established itself in the centre, but there was an unpleasant surprise in store for him.

14. ♖h5!

With a dual threat – 15. ♖xe8 and 15. ♗xh7+ ♗xh7 16. ♖f7+. The normal continuations at this point would be 14...g6 or 14...♗e7, after which the following variations are possible:

(a) 14...g6 15. ♗xg6 hxg6 16. ♗xg6, and now either 16...♗xg6? 17. ♖xg6+ ♗f8 18. ♗h6+ ♗e7 19. ♗e1+, or 16...♗b6 17. f4! with the most unpleasant threat of 18. ♗f3!, would be quite bad for Black. The best move, 16...♗e7, could be met by 17. ♗f4 ♖e6 18. ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 19. ♗fe1 ♖f7 20. ♖h6, and Black's chances of salvation are not great.

(b) On 14...♗e7, events would proceed less vehemently: 15. ♗f3 ♗b6 16. a3 a5 17. ♗ae1 ♗e6 18. ♗h4 g6 19. ♖h6, with a lasting initiative.

14... ♗xe5

Sacrificing the exchange is the best chance.

15. dxe5 fxe5

The position has suddenly been transformed. By sacrificing the exchange Black has practically deprived his opponent of his attacking chances. The Danish Grandmaster ought to have appreciated the change of circumstances and initiated play against the e5-pawn. This purpose would have been served by 16. f3, after which Black's centre would have been in danger.

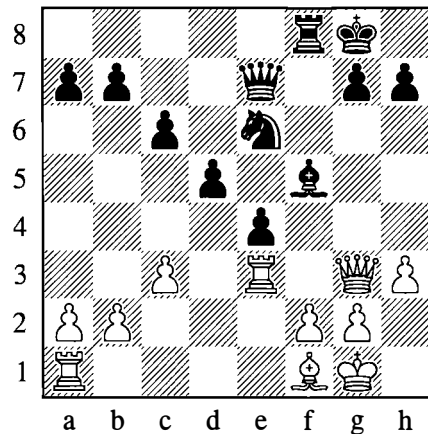
A similar method of fighting in an analogous situation was employed by Spassky in one of the games of the 1966 World Championship match.

16. ♗fe1 e4 17. ♗f1 ♗f6 18. ♖h4 ♗f5 19. ♖g3 ♖e7

Black has to avoid a queen exchange, so as not to give his opponent the chance to utilize his small material plus.

20. c3 ♗e6 21. ♗e3

White consents to the exchange of his dark-squared bishop. This decision calls for censure, since the bishop was playing an active role in the struggle against the enemy pawns. Better moves were 21. ♖e5 and 21. h3.

21... ♗g4 22. h3 ♗xe3 23. ♗xe3 ♗f8

The last few moves have brought a deterioration in White's position, and Larsen now has some difficult problems to solve. His dark-squared bishop is exchanged off, and at the moment his light-squared one has no particular prospects.

24. ♖e5 ♗g6 25. ♗d1 ♖f7 26. ♗d2 ♗f4

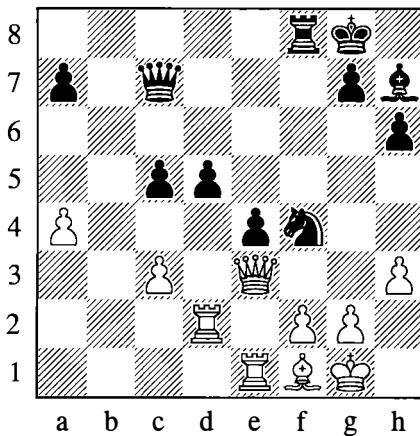
The knight endeavours to reach its ideal station – the d3-square. Once White is forced to capture it, a strong passed pawn will appear

on that square, drastically impairing the white position.

27.b4 h6 28.a4 ♖h7 29.♗d4

While White has no open files for utilizing the strength of his major pieces, Black already has everything prepared for a counter-offensive.

29...b6 30.♞e1 ♔c7 31.♚e3 c5 32.bxc5 bxc5



33.g3?

A mistake in time trouble. White shouldn't drive the knight onto the square where it wants to go anyway. The right course was to seize the b-file with 33.♞b1.

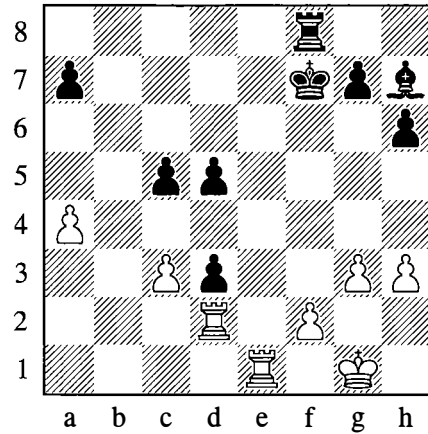
33...♜d3 34.♙xd3 exd3 35.♚e6†?

White is playing for a win; otherwise he would have given the exchange back at once with 35.♞xd3. He could then have obtained a draw with no trouble.

35...♚f7 36.♚xf7†

Black would meet 36.♚d6 with 36...♙e4.

36...♙xf7



The ending is very difficult for White, and after the following error it quickly concludes with his defeat. It was worth considering 37.♞e5! (suggested by Alberic O'Kelly), with some saving chances. Then 37...♞d8 (or 37...♙e4) would be wrong in view of 38.c4!. However, 37...♞b8! 38.f3 (the only move) 38...♞b3 39.♞xd5 ♞xc3 would give Black clearly the better game.

37.♞b2? c4! 38.f3 d4 39.♞c1 ♜e6 40.♜f2 ♙e4! 41.f4 ♞e8

The sealed move. The rook's action in the e-file decides the outcome of the battle. Black can answer 42.cxd4 with 42...♜d5 43.♜e3 ♙g6† 44.♜d2 ♜xd4, and White is helpless. There is the same result after 42.♜e1 dxc3 43.♞xc3 ♜d5 44.♜d2 ♙f3.

42.g4

This is hopeless, but then so is everything else.

42...♙c6 43.♞e1† ♜d5 44.♞xe8 ♙xe8 45.cxd4

Here White could already have called a halt to the struggle.

45...c3 46.♞b8 d2 47.♞d8† ♜c4 48.♞c8† ♜d3 0-1

Chapter 11

1967-1968

During the new three-year championship period, Petrosian played in five international tournaments and never once took first prize. His set-back in the 1967 Moscow tournament, where he shared 9th-12th places, was a heavy blow. He lost three games there, just as he had at Santa Monica a year earlier (that was the first time in 5 years that this had happened). Such events supplied the theme for conversations about his “invincibility”. The World Champion lost two games in the 4th Spartakiad of Nations of the USSR, where he shared 4th-5th places in the table of scores on top board. And then at Palma de Mallorca, 1968 – the final “trial of strength” before the next World Championship match – Petrosian came fourth, 2½ points behind Korchnoi, the tournament winner. The other players finishing ahead of him were Spassky and Larsen, who shared 2nd-3rd places.

In short, the World Champion had something to think about before his next match with Spassky, who once again had emerged as confident winner from the cycle of Candidates events. Petrosian was sufficiently self-critical – he understood the reasons for his slump. He was to talk about them later, towards the end of his career. After the Sochi tournament of 1977, he was asked: “When do *you* think you were playing better – when you were World Champion, or today?” He replied: “When I was Champion, of course. But if you want to ask when I was playing best of all in my entire chess career, the answer is, in the period from 1958 to 1963 – that is, in the years of struggling *for* the chess crown. It was the struggle itself that inspired me, but once you’ve got what you want, your ardour does cool off. That’s inevitable. With years, there’s a feeling that you’ve had your fill. No, I don’t mean you get fed up with chess, I’m not saying you eventually don’t want to look at a chessboard. All the same, your drive does gradually get blunted.”

GAME 82

Tigran Petrosian – David Bronstein

Moscow 1967

1.d4 e6 2.c4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♙g5 c5

It would of course be interesting to know what Bronstein was hoping for. Did he have some trick up his sleeve in one or other of the lines that have been analysed? Or did he just want to force his opponent to use up a large amount of energy and time in attempting, over-the-board, to recollect what had been written about this position and how players had handled it?

The latter possibility was a key consideration for me at this moment, seeing that the team events in which this game was played used an accelerated time control: 2 hours and 15 minutes for 45 moves.

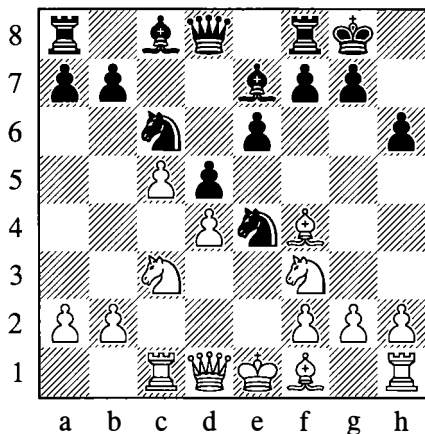
5.e3

Declining to engage in a “memory contest”.

5...cxd4 6.exd4 ♖e7 7.♞c1 0-0 8.♟f3 ♟c6 9.c5

The game has transposed into a variation of the Caro-Kann Defence. In this position the opening manuals promise Black easy and painless equality with 9...♟e4. After lengthy thought, Bronstein in turn decided to avoid a possible theoretical duel by steering the game into a channel that was relatively little studied.

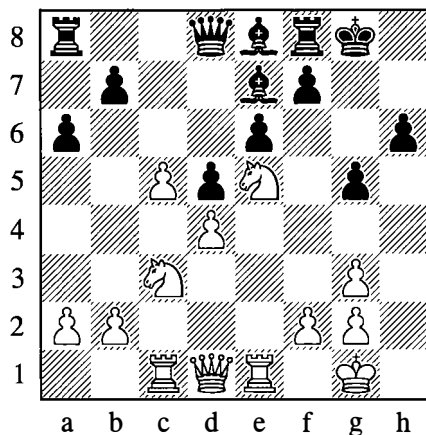
9...h6 10.♟f4 ♟e4



11.♟b5

White indirectly increases the pressure against e5, reckoning that the natural 11.♟d3 g5, followed by ...f7-f5, would give Black the initiative.

11...♟d7 12.0-0 g5 13.♟g3 a6 14.♟xc6 ♟xc6 15.♟e5 ♟e8 16.♞e1 ♟xg3 17.hxg3



This position looks clearly favourable to White. The plan of utilizing his queenside pawn majority is obvious. Given the compromised position of the black king, White's knight that is firmly established on e5 affords him excellent tactical opportunities. One thing that greatly pleased me during the game was that Black couldn't immediately drive this knight away. On 17...f6, White has 18.♟g4 h5 19.♟h6† ♟h7 20.♞xe6 ♟xh6 (20...♟d7 21.♞xh5, or 20...♟g6 21.♞e2 ♞e8 22.♞e1) 21.♞e2 ♞f7 22.♞e1, winning the piece back. Alas, when annotating the game it became clear that 22...♟b5 brings about a rook ending where White's winning chances are problematic.

But in the present situation, how many players would imagine that it was already time to worry about saving themselves, renouncing any ambitious designs? Not many, you would find.

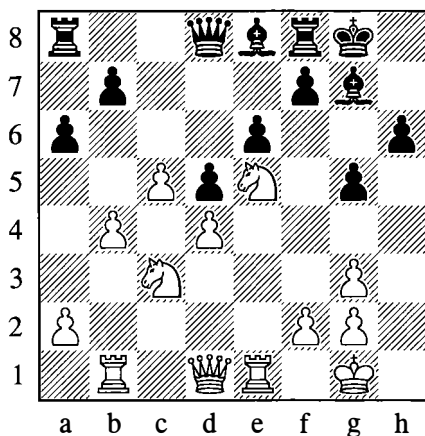
17...♟f6 18.b4 ♟g7

Bronstein has correctly realized that Black's only substantial chance to create counterplay lies in setting his e-pawn in motion. Indeed, if we suppose that Black plays ...f7-f6 and ...e6-e5 without hindrance, it turns out that White's position is not all that good. After an exchange on e5, the risk is that his knights will be left with no outposts. Nor will it be easy for White to defend his central pawn base, preserving the

closed nature of the struggle. Black will not only be threatening to exchange with ...e5xd4 and follow with ...f6-f5, activating his bishop on g7; another threat will be to form a mobile phalanx with ...e5-e4 and ...f6-f5.

We can conclude that White must make haste with active operations.

19.♖b1!



This, it seems to me, was the most difficult move in the game. White isn't lured by the prospect of an outwardly attractive pawn roller. Instead, giving preparatory support to his b-pawn, he aims for the rapid opening of the file on which his rook will have an excellent post – b6. Actually, it is just this position of the white rook on the sixth rank that will prove the decisive factor.

19...f6?

Up to now, not all Black's moves have been immune to serious criticism from the standpoint of "normal" chess – although there is no particular reason for censuring them either. Here, however, he commits an outright error. If Black intended to place his queen on c7, he should have done so at once.

20.♘d3 ♙f7 21.b5 ♖c7 22.bxa6 bxa6

Recapturing with the rook is no better, in view of 23.♘b5, heading for d6.

23.♖b6

Clearly White's play is further ahead than that of his opponent. A threat to sacrifice the exchange on e6 and then win the d-pawn is now in the air. This threat, combined with the no less dangerous plan of increasing the pressure along the b-file, naturally spurs Black to seek immediate counterplay.

23...e5 24.dxe5

Not a bad alternative is 24.♖b3. White's decision to force events is entirely reasonable, as the difference in combat effectiveness between the white and black pieces is obvious.

24...fxe5 25.♘xe5 ♖xc5

Black had another variation at his disposal at this point. I had had some doubts about the assessment of its final position when pondering my 24th move. The line goes: 25...♘xe5 26.♘xd5 ♖fd8 27.♘xc7 ♖xd1 28.♖xd1 ♘xc7, giving White the pleasant and yet none too simple choice between two options – 29.♖b7 or 29.♖xh6.

It emerged after the game that Bronstein hadn't even looked at this line. It's hard to blame him for that, for after the move he actually plays, it looks as if White has been too impetuous in cutting the Gordian knot. There are now two possibilities that are unconvincing for all their spectacular appearance. One is 26.♘a4 ♖a5 27.♘c6, rather surprisingly trapping the queen. The other is 26.♘xf7 ♖xb6 27.♘d5 ♖b7 28.♘e7†, with an immediate win. However, 26.♘a4 can simply be met by 26...♖c7, while on 26.♘xf7 Black just plays 26...♖xf7.

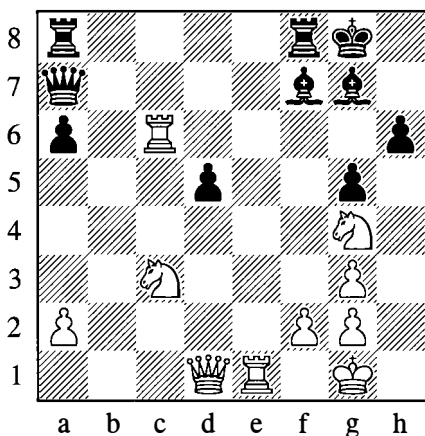
26.♖c6 ♖a7

The only move to preserve the pawn on d5, but now Black loses virtually by force.

His relatively best chance was 26...♖a5, assenting to 27.♜xf7 ♜xf7 28.♞xd5 ♞xd5 (not 28...♙xc3 29.♞g6†) 29.♜xd5 ♙d4, when Black has some compensation for the pawn lost.

27.♜g4!

Now comes the retribution for the pawn weaknesses Black incurred earlier. The h6-pawn is indefensible, and its fall clearly means the collapse of the black king's fortress.



27...♙h8

The simplest answer to 27...d4 is 28.♜e4, while 27...♙h5 is most simply met by 28.♜xh6† ♙xh6 29.♞xh5 ♞xf2† 30.♙h2 ♙g7 (or 30...♞xe1 31.♞xh6) 31.♞e7 ♞f7 32.♜xd5 (32.♜d1 is also good), with a decisive attack.

28.♜xh6 ♙e8 29.♞xe8 ♞xf2† 30.♙h2 ♞axe8 31.♞h5!

Curiously enough, this is White's first move with his queen!

31...♞e1 32.♜f5† ♙g8 33.♜xg7 ♞f1

He could have done without this, although against any other continuation 34.♞h6 would have been decisive.

34.♞xe8† 1-0

GAME 83

Tigran Petrosian – Jan Hein Donner

Venice 1967

Well, who could have expected that Donner would win nine games? This was a veritable calamity. I had supposed that a "plus eight" score would be more than adequate for first place. It is true that I was one win short of my minimum target, but really now – eleven out of fifteen had always been enough for first in respectable tournaments. Evidently tournaments with an uneven field of contestants demand special tactics.

When after 6 rounds Janosevic and Donner had accumulated 5 points each, I wasn't perturbed. I still had to play both these Grandmasters, and with White too. I wasn't even particularly upset after drawing with the 65-year-old Italian Calapso, a player who quite frankly wasn't in the international class.

"How was it possible to draw with him?" Janosevic exclaimed. "I'll show you how to play against outsiders."

A few days later, the game Calapso–Janosevic took place. By move 30 Black was left without his entire queenside, and soon afterwards the Yugoslav Grandmaster conceded defeat...

In round 7, I accomplished the first part of my own task by forcing Janosevic's resignation. It remained for Donner, who was a point ahead of me, to be "put in his place". Our encounter occurred in the ninth round.

1.e4

I am gradually coming to the conclusion that when playing for a win, this is the only way to open the game.

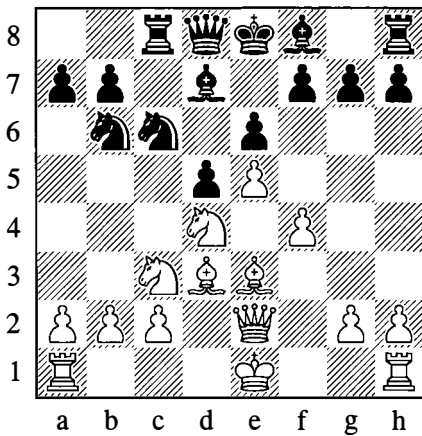
1...e6 2.d4 d5 3.♜c3 ♜f6 4.e5 ♜fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♜f3 ♜c6 7.♙e3 cxd4 8.♜xd4 ♜b6

Not a good move; 8...♖c5 was better, although the opening line that Donner has chosen scarcely gives equality.

9.♙d3 ♘d7 10.♞e2

For the moment White doesn't define his intentions; he retains the possibility of castling on either side.

10...♞c8



11.♘db5!

A move that is highly unpleasant for Black. White wishes to play 12.♞f2, threatening 13.♘xa7. If 11...♖c4, then 12.♙xc4 dxc4 13.0-0-0 with a large positional plus. Black can defend with 11...a6, but this is met by 12.♞f2 ♖a8 13.♘d4, and the knight on a8 is wholly devoid of prospects.

Donner therefore sacrifices a pawn in the hope of obtaining some counterplay.

11...♖a5 12.♘xa7 ♜a8 13.♖ab5 ♘ac4 14.♙c1 ♙b4 15.0-0 ♖a4

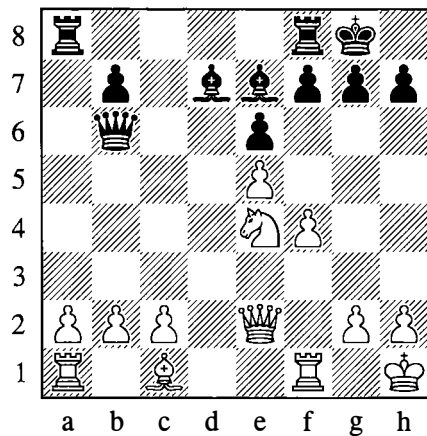
Black gives up a second pawn. Actually he no longer has any choice. If he continues quietly, say with 15...0-0, the reply 16.b3 leaves him without the slightest hope.

16.♙xc4 dxc4 17.♞xc4 ♙c5† 18.♙h1 ♘xc3 19.♘xc3 ♞b6 20.♘e4 ♙e7

Here 20...♙b5 is not dangerous in view of 21.♞xc5 ♞xc5 22.♘xc5 ♙xf1 23.♘xb7, and there will be no halting White's queenside pawn avalanche.

21.♞e2 0-0

White is simply two pawns up. Black has a little pressure, but it can easily be neutralized by 22.c3 followed by 23.♙e3 (22...♙b5 23.c4). Instead of this, I start making bad moves. The reason is unclear to me to this day.



22.b3? ♙c6 23.♙b2 ♜fd8 24.♘d6?

The series of errors continues. As will be clear from what follows, White's last move was based on a miscalculation. The safest course was 24.♘d2 followed by 25.♘f3, consolidating his position.

24...♞c5 25.a4 ♙xd6

I only now realized that the intended 26.♙a3 would simply be met by 26...♞xa3.

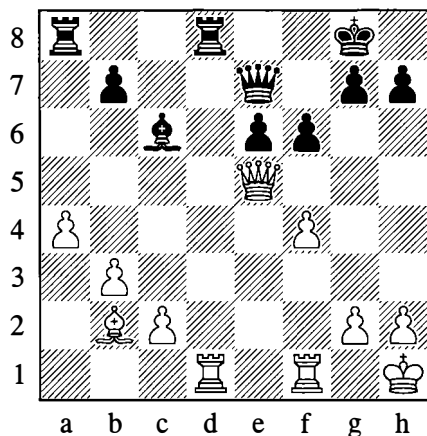
26.exd6 ♞xd6 27.♞ad1

Played in a state of confusion; better 27.♞g4 ♞f8, and only then 28.♞ad1.

27...♞e7 28.♞e5

Here too 28.♞g4 was better, although by now White's winning chances are microscopic.

28...f6



29.♖e3

[Ed. note: A more precise move was 29.♖e2; this prevents 29...♞d7, as after an exchange on d7 followed by ♞d1, Black must concede the d-file.]

29...♞d7 30.♞xd7 ♖xd7 31.h3 ♗d5 32.♞f2 ♞d8 33.♟h2 ♗f5 34.♠d4 h5 35.♞d2 ♗e4 36.♗f2 ♞d5 37.♠e3 ♞xd2 38.♗xd2 e5 39.fxe5 ♗xe5† 40.♠f4 ♗d5 41.♗xd5†

If 41.♗f2, then 41...h4 with a simple draw.

41...♠xd5 42.c4 ♠e4 43.a5 g5 44.♠c7 h4 45.♠d8 ♟f7 46.♟g1 ♠c2 47.b4 ♠d3 48.c5 ♠b5

And the game ended in a draw on the 63rd move. I won't conceal the fact that this game unnerved me, not so much by its result as by the nature of my mistakes.

...½-½

GAME 84

Tigran Petrosian – Florin Gheorghiu

Moscow 1967

Notes by V. Simagin

1.c4 e5 2.♟c3 ♟c6 3.♟f3 ♟f6 4.g3

The main variation is 4.d4.

4...♠b4 5.♠g2 0-0 6.0-0 ♞e8

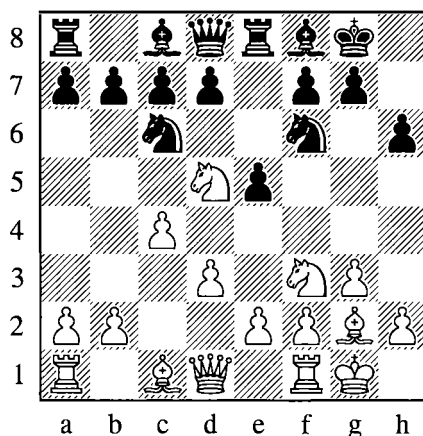
It was worth considering 6...e4 7.♟g5 ♠xc3 8.dxc3 ♞e8, as in Sliwa – Smyslov, Polanicka Zdroj 1966.

7.d3 h6

A poor move; 7...♠xc3 8.bxc3 d6 was in the spirit of the position.

8.♟d5 ♠f8

The strategic contours of the position have already taken shape. White is active on the queenside, Black ought to be developing an initiative on the kingside. The black pieces, however, are ineffectively placed for an attack.



9.♟xf6†!

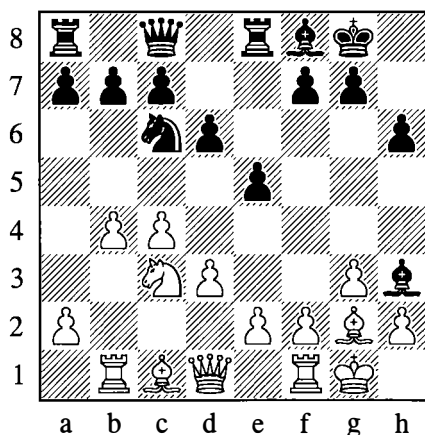
A routine move would have been 9.♞b1. Petrosian exchanges his knight with a concrete plan in view. It consists in playing for the

“good minor piece”, which is what White’s other active knight will later prove to be – as opposed to Black’s passive dark-squared bishop.

9...♖xf6 10.♘d2 d6 11.♘e4 ♔d8 12.♘c3 ♕d7 13.b4!

Starting a queenside offensive. After 13...♘xb4 14.♖b1 ♘c6 15.♖xb7, White has the better position.

13...♖c8 14.♖b1 ♕h3



15.e4!

A subtle positional continuation, which in my view is worth just as much as some spectacular combinations. White consistently pursues the strategy of making his opponent’s dark-squared bishop “bad”. The weakening of d4 is without significance, as White’s own dark-squared bishop has still been retained.

15...♕xg2?

A more cunning move was 15...♕e6!, making it harder for White to carry out his plan.

16.♕xg2 g6 17.h4! ♕g7

And here 17...h5 was considerably stronger.

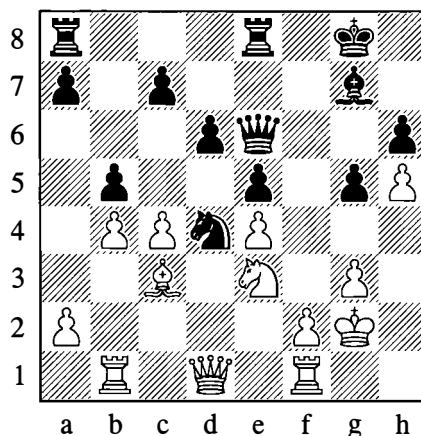
18.h5! g5 19.♘d5 ♘d4 20.♘e3 f5

Already this move is forced. White was

threatening to play 21.♕b2 and seize the f5-square after exchanging his opponent’s knight.

21.♕b2 ♖xe4 22.dxe4 ♔e6 23.♕c3 b5

Strategically Black has a lost game. Gheorghiu therefore decides to go in for tactical complications, even though they favour White.



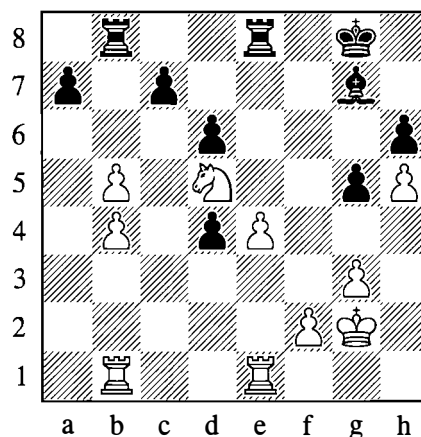
24.cxb5 ♖xa2

Or 24...♘xb5 25.♖d3 ♘xc3 26.♖xc3 ♖xa2 27.♖xc7.

25.♖d3 ♖e2

There is nothing better. White was threatening 26.♕xd4 and 27.♘d5.

26.♖xe2 ♘xe2 27.♘d5 ♖ab8 28.♖fe1 ♘d4 29.♕xd4 exd4



30.♖bc1! ♖b7 31.♜xc7 ♖e5 32.♖c6 g4
33.♜d5 ♖xb5 34.♖xd6 ♖b7

On 34...♖xh5, White has the very strong 35.♖d7!, threatening 36.♖c1.

35.♖g6 ♜h7 36.♖xg4 ♖d7

Hastening his defeat. However, Black would also be in a bad way after 36...♖xh5 37.f4.

37.♖h1 ♖e6 38.♖d1 ♖c6 39.♖d2 ♜e5 40.f4
♜h8 41.f5

Black resigned.

1–0

Though Petrosian's performances in international tournaments showed something of a decline, this was by no means reflected in his results for the Soviet team. At the 18th Olympiad in Lugano (1968) he once again made the best score on top board (+9 –0 =3).

The following are excerpts from an interview with Petrosian after the Soviet victory in the Olympiad.

"How can you explain the ease (the deceptive ease, possibly?) with which first place was achieved?"

"Well of course it can't be maintained that our performance in the Olympiad was a carefree triumphant stroll. One thing is certain, though: the Soviet Grandmasters, whose strength isn't in doubt anyway, had prepared for the 18th Olympiad especially well. A good policy had finally been revived: it was arranged for the players to assemble for training just before the Olympiad, in a place out in the country. Admittedly I didn't manage to take part myself, because of personal matters. But according to my colleagues, the two weeks before the Olympiad that they spent in Sukhanovo, not far from Moscow,

helped them to get into form. And there was one other thing that sounds like a minor detail at first, but meant a lot. At Lugano we stayed in quite a small hotel in the upper part of the town, separated from the centre, away from the town noise. It was a working environment that allowed you to get a good rest and sustain your fighting spirit.

"But it goes without saying that our winning margin wouldn't have been so impressive if it hadn't been for the skill and the sense of responsibility of every member of the Soviet team. If I'm not mistaken, in the whole of the Olympiad there were no more than one or two games in which we stood worse.

"What was your impression of the Soviet team's chief rivals?"

"The Yugoslavs, it seemed to me, were simply glad that they'd managed to uphold their reputation as the 'number two chess power' – a distinction that they very much value and are proud of. Today, as I see it, the situation of the 'vice-champions' is not all that secure. The Bulgarians, for instance, would have been perfectly capable of fighting for second place if they'd truly believed in their own strength right from the start. The great success of their team is only right and proper. Third place in the Olympiad is a fitting reward for the Bulgarian Chess Federation's persistent efforts over many years.

"The Americans of course were disappointing. Dropping from second place to fourth isn't very pleasant. It's true that chess in the USA is becoming more popular with every year, and their country's team has been reckoned with, just as before. But the American squad at Lugano were compelled to admit that without Fischer they don't represent a formidable force."

GAME 85**Tigran Petrosian – Morelos Castro Aguilar**

Lugano (ol) 1968

Notes by I. Boleslavsky
and A. Konstantinopolsky

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♗e2 c6

Premature. After 5...0–0 White would be forced to give an indication of his opening plans. Now, he advantageously switches to a Four Pawns Attack.

6.f4 h5?

Fearing e4–e5, Black makes a move that drastically weakens his kingside. The lesser evil would be to castle or play 6...e5, although after 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.♗xd8† ♖xd8 9.♘f3 the initiative would be in White's hands.

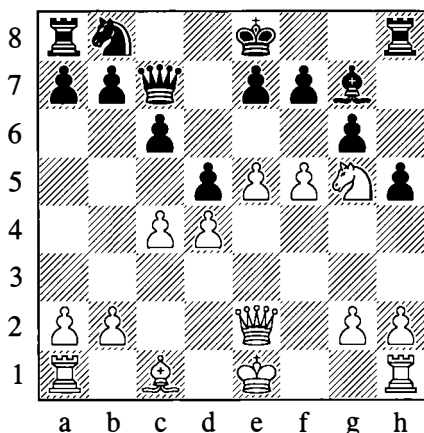
7.♘f3 ♗g4 8.♘g5

Immediately prodding the weak spot in his opponent's formation.

8...♖c7 9.e5 ♗xe2 10.♗xe2 ♘h7 11.♘xh7 ♗xh7 12.♘e4

The second knight too is heading for g5, with an incidental threat of 13.♘xd6†.

12...d5 13.♘g5 ♗h8 14.f5!



After this blow, Black's pawn chain is torn apart.

14...gxf5 15.e6 f6 16.♘f7 ♗h7 17.0–0

The black king is surrounded. There is no defence against the threat of 18.♗xf5 followed by ♗xh5.

17...dxc4 18.♗xf5 ♖b6 19.♗e3 c5 20.d5 ♘d7 21.♗xh5 ♗xh5 22.♗xh5 ♖xb2 23.♘d6† ♖d8 24.♗e8†

Black resigned.

1–0

GAME 86**Tigran Petrosian – Cenek Kottbauer**

Lugano (ol) 1968

Notes by I. Boleslavsky
and A. Konstantinopolsky

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.d4 0–0 6.♗e2 e5 7.d5 a5

Given that the basic idea of the Petrosian System is a pawn offensive on the queenside, Black prepares to blockade the critical points c5 and b4 by stationing his pawn on a5 and his knight on a6.

8.♗g5 h6 9.♗h4 ♘a6 10.0–0 ♖e8

The pin on the knight was preventing Black from developing his forces.

11.♘d2 ♘h7 12.a3 h5

Clearing the h6-square for his bishop, Black incidentally sets up the threat of ...g6–g5 and ...h5–h4, trapping that bishop's opposite number.

13.f3 ♗h6

A major inaccuracy with a significant effect on the course of the struggle. The right move

is 13...♔d7, when the positional threat of 14...a4 compels White to spend a tempo on b2-b3. After 13...♔d7 14.b3 Black can play 14...♔h6 15.♖b1 ♘c5, and if 16.b4 then 16...axb4 17.axb4 ♘a4, with adequate counter-chances.

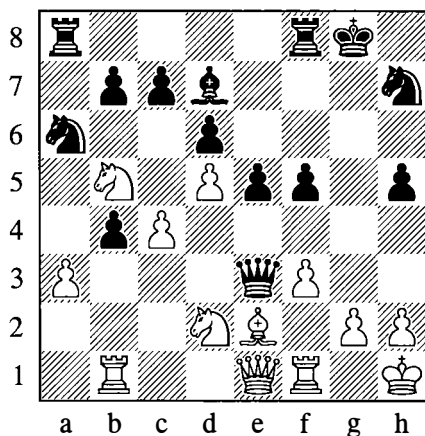
14.b4! ♔d7 15.♖b1 ♔e3† 16.♔h1

White could also play 16.♔f2, but he reckons that the position of Black's bishop on e3 is not sufficiently secure.

16...f5 17.exf5

As Petrosian noted, quite a good move was 17.♖e1, when there could follow, for example, 17...f4 18.♔f2 ♔xf2 19.♖xf2 and then c4-c5. By exchanging on f5, White counts on exploiting the weakening of his opponent's kingside.

17...gxf5 18.♖e1 ♖g6 19.♔f2 ♖h6 20.♔xe3 ♖xe3 21.♘b5 axb4



22.♖b3!

An essential refinement. On 22.axb4, the continuation would be 22...♘xb4 23.♖xb4 ♖a2!.

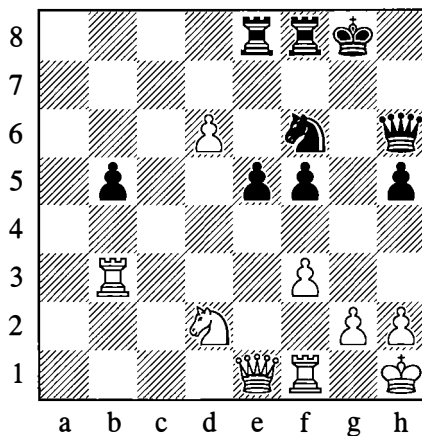
22...♖h6

The attempt to win a pawn by 22...♖c5 would allow White a strong attack after 23.f4.

23.axb4 ♖ae8 24.♘c3 ♘f6 25.c5!

Now the poor position of the knight on a6 makes itself felt.

25...dxc5 26.♔xa6 bxa6 27.bxc5 ♔b5 28.♘xb5 axb5 29.d6 cxd6 30.cxd6



At first sight Black's position looks sound, but his king has no safe shelter.

30...♖b8 31.♖e3 ♘d7 32.f4 e4

Understandably, 32...exf4 33.♖e6 would be too dangerous.

33.♖g3† ♔h8 34.♖g5

White's threats are unanswerable: 34...♖h7 would be met by 35.♖a1† ♘f6 (♖f6) 36.♖c1 etc., so Black is forced to give up a pawn.

34...♘f6 35.♖xf5 ♖h7 36.♖e5 ♖fe8 37.♖a1 ♖xe5 38.fxe5 ♘g4 39.e6† ♖g7 40.♘xe4 b4 41.e7

Black resigned.

1-0

Chapter 12

1969

The following article, entitled “Tigran Petrosian: The Philosophy of Restriction”, was written by Soviet Master Yakov Damsky specially for the World Championship match. A brochure issued for the opening of the match by the “Reklama” publishing house began with this article.

A human being can sometimes be very difficult to get to know – because shyness can sometimes be taken for aloofness, and strength can be taken for a phlegmatic temperament. Words about one’s own superstitiousness are sometimes a cover for intense paranoia, and “gusto” may hide utter confusion. But if someone talks and behaves and does everything in a “synchronized” manner, there can be no mistakes here; and it becomes legitimate to speak of the “philosophy” that this person professes.

Tigran Petrosian adheres to a “philosophy of restriction”. If you don’t believe it, try observing Tigran for yourself – during a meeting (let us say), where he is itching to stand up and challenge the speaker with the force of a typical southern temperament. Instead he openly restrains himself, speaking briefly and to the point, with only a small admixture of emotion. You might of course put this down to his essential good breeding that doesn’t for instance allow him to interrupt. This would be true but incomplete. Behind Petrosian’s self-restraint there lies the philosophy of restriction.

This philosophy also governs his chess. If he is forced into a tactical fight, in which his opponent’s pieces may be in an awkward tangle and exposed to attack for a long period, Petrosian sees a great deal and calculates as far ahead as the position requires. Something similar also happens when he is “driven into a corner”. Then Petrosian reacts with the unerring blows and the mighty leap of a tiger. The tremendous tenacity in defence, the millimetre-by-millimetre retreat, the tactics of levelling out his opponent’s initiative – all this can be transformed into the most unexpected counter-stroke. But as long as Petrosian has the initiative, he doesn’t like to perform a tiger’s leaps. It’s not that he can’t – he just doesn’t like to. His record as a player contains a good many superbly conducted attacks, sacrifices, combinations. Incidentally he himself judges these games by very exacting standards, and when he was awarded a brilliancy prize for his combination against Bykhovsky in the last Moscow Championship, Petrosian gave a candid shrug of the shoulders:

“I wouldn’t have given the prize to such a game...”

After winning his difficult, gruelling match against Spassky in 1966, Petrosian himself formulated his views on the art of chess: “restriction of the opponent’s possibilities; a strategy embracing the whole board; encirclement of the enemy king, and the gradual tightening of the ring round it”. So there you have it – “restriction”. But restricting your opponent’s play is not possible without restricting your own. That is what Petrosian does. Not the cavalry charge of a

Tal with the cry of “Swords drawn!”, and not the artillery bombardment of pre-selected targets in Botvinnik style, but the methodical undermining of the very foundations of the besieged fortress. And very often, when the sapper Petrosian digs his tunnel of explosives under his opponent’s powder magazine with deadly accuracy, the game of chess is enriched with a new example of fine positional art.

Such is Petrosian’s credo. In view of this, is it at all surprising that he loses “once in a blue moon”? This was noticed ages ago; the journalists then christened him “iron Tigran”, and began investigating what it was all about. According to one of them, Petrosian’s concern for his own safety stemmed from the difficult days of his youth, from those harsh experiences of life that the present World Champion had to undergo as a as a fifteen-year-old first-category player. To agree with this is to fail to understand the essence of Petrosian’s creative approach to chess.

His concern for safety is based on other factors. In the first place, he sees only too much – on his opponent’s behalf. He discovers defensive or offensive possibilities for his opponent that the latter would sometimes not even have suspected. Secondly, having discovered them, he sets about restricting them in full accordance with his chess convictions. And in this process which amounts to a struggle with himself, he often arrives at positions where a peaceful outcome is practically unavoidable.

This means that many interesting possibilities found by Petrosian remain behind the scenes, but on the other hand it guarantees the high degree of solidity in his play. You can sometimes surprise Petrosian or even stun him with an unexpected move, as he once confessed in his annotations; but even then, knocking him out of his saddle is very difficult...

He is a warrior of match chess. Even before Petrosian became World Champion, it was said of him that “if he gains the crown, he won’t be surrendering it easily.” Indeed, in matches there is none of that frantic race on the edge of the precipice that is familiar to tournament players. In a match, the important thing above all is not to lose – and then a first, second and third win will come “of their own accord”. It is in single combat that the acute sense of danger arising from Petrosian’s philosophy of restriction is a special advantage. This sense very rarely lets him down and often enables him to create games of marvellous originality.

Yes, he is a born match player, but he is also endowed with tremendous intuition. After defeating Spassky three years ago, why do you think Petrosian broke with tradition and omitted to write a book about the match? Of course he was busy preparing his Master of Science dissertation (which he defended at the end of 1968), but it seems to me that that is not the whole story. He foresaw that his most likely rival would be Spassky once again, and his understanding of the challenger was something that he “kept to himself” with full justification. By way of making up for his rather inadequate tournament practice of late, Petrosian set off for Palma de Mallorca together with Spassky, saying jokingly (but in every joke there is a grain of truth): “I’m going to keep an eye on Spassky’s play.”

* * *

“The match I was expecting...” These words of Petrosian’s were used as the heading for an interview that the World Champion gave shortly before the start of his second match with Spassky.

“Who was your teacher?”

“My teacher number one was life itself. Teacher number two was the now deceased master Archil Ebralidze, who taught chess in the Tbilisi Pioneers’ Palace. Then came Capablanca, Nimzowitsch... and after that it was a case of ‘calling at all stations,’ as they say; I learnt from everyone I happened to encounter at the chessboard. And I did a lot of reading.”

“What in general is your attitude to the press? Do you read the papers just before the match and while it’s going on? What do you make of the predictions?”

“I always read the papers and I’m particularly interested in what they write about the match. I treat the predictions as an inseparable part of sport journalism. I’m not used to favourable predictions, and that’s why I read them with interest every time. As for the pessimistic ones, whether they come from specialists or people with nothing to do with chess, I’ve developed immunity to them.

“A conclusion based on sober analysis is easy to distinguish from the usual cases where the journalist expresses his own wishes, often I’m afraid in a tactless form. Take for instance one of the recent issues of *The Week*, where Grandmaster Kotov maintains that all Spassky has to do now is register his inheritance rights to the chess crown. Fortunately the stage of the Estrada Theatre isn’t a lawyer’s office, and the result of the sporting duel depends only on the participants themselves.

“Incidentally, I’ve made predictions a few times myself. You’ll recall that in 1966, just after the end of my match with Spassky, I said I wouldn’t be at all surprised if I had to face this same amiable opponent again three years later. Did any of the other candidates take offence at this? It’s all a matter of the form of the utterance and what lies behind it.”

“Since we’re on the subject of the candidates, what do you think of the results of the contests between them?”

“I had foreseen these results and was expecting a match with none other than Spassky. At the moment he’s undoubtedly the player most worthy to be the challenger in the World Championship match. It was only natural that no one could stop him.”

“Would Fischer have been able to do so?”

“At the present time, in my view, Spassky is playing better than Fischer. Sometimes I feel that the reason why Fischer didn’t start in the 1964 Amsterdam Interzonal and why he withdrew from the Sousse tournament was that he was afraid of losing a match against one of the candidates. If he did, of course, the aura of invincibility surrounding the ‘genius Bobby’ would be noticeably dimmed; and then that American with his practical mind would no longer be able to demand the suitably high financial conditions from tournament organizers who want to see him in their lists of competitors.”

“You put the word ‘genius’ in inverted commas...”

“In all spheres of cultural life, people use this big and mighty word with caution. And that isn’t because they envy their colleagues – it’s just that their feeling of responsibility is too great. Genius! I don’t like it when this supreme human distinction gets conferred with extraordinary nonchalance on large numbers of chessplayers. That way, if we’re not careful, genius will suffer from inflation, which is just what has happened already to the FIDE Grandmaster title.

“A genius in chess is ahead of his time, but that of course can only be perceived afterwards, in

retrospect. From this point of view, only a very few can be called geniuses. Morphy, Steinitz... perhaps Tal. The Grandmaster from Riga introduced something into chess that people at the time didn't entirely figure out. Unfortunately, looking back admiringly on the peak of Tal's creative achievements was something that we were able to do too soon. Though possibly it's a little early to be saying this..."

[Ed. note: Petrosian was soon to have occasion to convince himself of Fischer's genius in the next Candidates cycle, when in 1971 Fischer scored 6:0 wins against Taimanov and Larsen before defeating Petrosian himself by 6½ points to 2½ in the final match.]

"What do you think of the qualification system for the World Championship candidates?"

"With any system, what you have to do first and foremost is play chess well. But perhaps it would be more congenial to fulfil that essential demand in a double-round final tournament with, say, twelve participants. The majority of the world's leading Grandmasters, as I know, are of the same opinion. But they don't go any further than stating it in interviews with journalists. A well argued proposition to FIDE could make more of an impact."

"Would you like to say a few words about how you've been preparing for the coming match? Who's been helping you?"

"Ever since the time of the Alekhine – Euwe matches, seconds have begun to play quite a role in the conduct of the World Championship. And during the preparations it isn't by any means just one helper who takes part in one form or another. Often the names of these helpers are kept secret. And that makes sense! Names are often associated with views, and they can affect the way your future opponent approaches the struggle.

"Sometimes it happens the other way. Like in logical puzzles where you seek the solution from its converse. Observing your opponent's manner of play and the ideas he demonstrates at the board, you can guess who has been helping him. This may not be all that useful, but it's interesting anyway. To take an example from the now far-off year of 1966: towards the end of the match, Spassky's predilection for systems with an early ...b7-b5 'smacked' of Smyslov, who wasn't at all numbered among the challenger's official seconds.

"As always, I've prepared for the match with my chess friends of long standing, Grandmasters Isaak Boleslavsky and Alexey Suetin. In the 'Krasnaia Pakhra' rest home not far from Moscow (before moving to our favourite 'Sukhanovo'), we all made good use of our time with the extra company of Grandmaster Semyon Furman. You probably know that Alekhine, in his time, complained about opponents whose bad play prevented him from creating genuine works of chess art. Well, I didn't at all want Spassky to be in that same unenviable situation. I wanted him to have a worthy co-author for his creations..."

"I also devoted quite a lot of time to physical preparation. For the moment (touch wood!) I have no complaints about my health. Potentially though, I have to admit that in this all-important area I'm more like Tal than Botvinnik, Smyslov or my future opponent.

I did a lot of skiing and a lot of walking in the marvellous wintry forest, and it seems to me that I've now understood the secret of some players' competitive longevity. I want to distance myself a little from a chessplayer's critical age in life. Like it or not, I'll be forty shortly after the end of the match. Botvinnik had some reason to say the other day that Petrosian was approaching the fateful dividing line..."

“Not long ago you defended your Master of Science dissertation. Didn’t your academic work hinder your preparation for the match?”

“The dissertation cost me a lot of effort and time, but on the other hand it helped me to sort out some of my views on chess. If failure is in store for me in the match, I won’t blame my defeat on my academic work.

“In general, this past year has been virtually the most arduous and the most fruitful of my life. Apart from the dissertation, the weekly *64* was set up, and I was accorded the honour of editing it. Despite this, my thinking about the match carried on in the background.”

“Just what is a World Chess Champion?”

“I know of only one definition that I consider accurate enough, namely: the first among equals.

“I’m just as disappointed as anyone else is with my recent tournament performances. Perhaps I really haven’t been taking enough care of my ‘reputation’ as Champion, but sometimes you have to choose who you are Champion *for* – for yourself or for the chess world. Of course, after defeating Botvinnik in 1963, I could have devoted myself entirely to chasing after first prizes. There is a fairly well-worn path that leads to success: play rarely, and only in carefully chosen tournaments – and you will gain the first places you set your sights on. I am against such tactics (if you can call them that), on principle.”

* * *

Spassky too was preparing for the contest. The winner of the last two Candidates cycles was at the height of his form, but special preparation was required for victory in a World Championship match. From the statements he made afterwards, we learn about the work he put in. We will limit ourselves to the most interesting excerpts.

“Together with Grandmasters Bondarevsky and Krogus, at Dubna in the Moscow region, I worked at preparation on a large scale. It was hard, exhausting work, but it was creative work, useful and fruitful in the highest degree. First and foremost, I had to put together an accurate picture of my opponent. Who and what was Petrosian as a chessplayer? The three of us came to the unanimous conclusion that for all his tremendous positional mastery, the World Champion was not a player in the strict classical mould. His style, which concentrates on restricting his opponents’ possibilities, is unique, and exceedingly effective in match play in particular. It is no accident that Petrosian is a phenomenal match warrior. Yet his unsurpassed skill at manoeuvring and tacking is sometimes governed not only by the requirements of the position but above all by prophylactic tasks.

“Three years ago I didn’t have a precise plan of campaign for the match, and I veered from one extreme to the other. This time we worked out a definite policy that I pursued all the way through the match. It was a policy that we called classical. This meant keeping to classical schemes of development, playing in a strictly classical style, choosing clear and logical plans and striving to implement them accurately. I therefore rejected ‘sepulchral’ Indian structures and settled on the classical Tarrasch Defence. Overall, our plan succeeded; regarding the Tarrasch in particular, I would remind you that Petrosian never once succeeded in winning the d5-pawn. Above all else I wanted to become a more classical player. And during the match the classical rails kept me from the temptation to deviate to one side.

“I would also point out that in a long match it is hard to overrate the importance of being able to keep up your fighting mood, to maintain the wish and the readiness to fight until the last move of the last game. It was my principle to sustain my fighting spirit to the end. I considered it essential to develop immunity against any kind of surprise, whether on the chessboard or away from it. Above all I needed to train myself to accept losses and wins with the same equanimity.”

The excitement surrounding the Petrosian – Spassky match that began on 12 April 1969 exceeded all expectations. The Estrada Theatre couldn’t accommodate all who wanted to be there, and the games were relayed directly for demonstration outside the building. People were obviously in suspense; in the period between their two matches, the tournament successes of the challenger had perceptibly surpassed the achievements of the World Champion. From Petrosian’s viewpoint, strangely enough, the opening phase of the match was like a mirror image of his clash with Botvinnik in 1963. Only this time he himself was in the role of a man “under siege”, while the challenger was acting much more energetically. In spite of losing the first game, Spassky was two points ahead when the match was one-third over, and victory in the ninth game could have taken the whole contest to the brink of a crisis. But that did not happen. In the adjourned position Spassky failed to make use of his realistic winning chances, and this had psychological consequences that radically altered the course of the match. Petrosian did not hesitate to “prolong” Spassky’s depression by taking a time-out, and he went on to level the score. The opponents went into the final third of the match on equal terms, but you felt that the equilibrium could not last long. As is well known, time is on the side of the young, and the seriousness of Spassky’s intentions was attested by the time-out that he took when the score stood at 8:8. With the weekend taken into account, this enabled him to extend the number of free days to four.

In game 17, playing Black, Petrosian took up the challenge, but after obtaining the better position he committed the psychological error of offering a draw. Spassky rejected peace negotiations and succeeded in showing that the draw was not “there for the asking”. With a further victory in the 19th game he extended his lead to two points, and although Petrosian recovered to win the 20th, Spassky scored a striking win in the 21st. Petrosian must be given his due – he fought to the end, but in game 23, trying to exploit his last chance, he overstepped the bounds of legitimate risk. Spassky magnanimously offered a draw in the adjourned position and won the match with a score of 12½:10½.

The new World Champion was objective: “In Petrosian’s play I sensed a certain constraint and diffidence, especially in the second half of the match. It seems to me he made a psychological mistake. After levelling the score by winning the tenth and eleventh games, he evidently decided that I was beaten and could not recover. His play was increasingly arid, he became totally servile. That way he gave me an extra chance to succeed, for I was in the role of attacker and he was in that of defender. Thus in the seventeenth game I rejected Petrosian’s offer of a draw even though I understood perfectly well that I had the worse position. I felt that he was getting very nervous, and I took the risk of continuing the fight. My calculation proved correct. Petrosian committed a number of errors and suffered defeat. He lost the match, but did so with honour. He fought to the end, and I sincerely admire his courage.”

GAME 87

Tigran Petrosian – Boris Spassky

Moscow (10) 1969

Notes by Isaak Boleslavsky [*Is. B.*]
and Igor Bondarevsky [*Ig. B.*]

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4

Petrosian's unexpected salvation in the previous game could not of course alter the state of the match – Spassky remained with a solid two-point lead – but the psychological effect of that draw was very great. Petrosian had regained confidence in his powers and recovered his will to fight, whereas Spassky, for a time, had lost his inward composure.

Now, for the first time in the match, Spassky opts for the Nimzo-Indian Defence, and judging from the way the game developed, this was most likely an improvisation. Spassky (just like Petrosian in the game before) is impelled to seek a complex struggle because he doesn't want to have to conduct an accurate defence in the worse position, without any assurance that this defence will end successfully. Yet Spassky does *not* succeed in stirring up complex play, and with every move – by an irony of fate – he comes closer to what he was trying to avoid: an inferior position without any counterplay. [*Is. B.*]

4.e3 0–0 5.♗d3 b6

Spassky wants to play the system with his bishop developed on b7, but it soon turns out that he has missed the appropriate moment and is forced to settle for an inferior version of the line. He should have played 4...b6 before castling; then 5.♗d3 ♗b7 6.♘f3 would have given rise to the usual variations. The continuation 6.f3 c5! 7.♘e2 cxd4 8.exd4 0–0 9.0–0 d5 promises White no advantage.

6.♘ge2

This move in the Rubinstein system carries an important thematic burden: it forestalls a possible doubling of White's pawns after an exchange on c3. In my view, this system is wholly in keeping with Petrosian's style. [*Ig. B.*]
Sharper positions result from 6.e4. [*Is. B.*]

6...d5

White answers 6...♗b7 with 7.a3, for example: 7...♗e7 8.d5, or 7...♗xc3† 8.♘xc3, after which 8...♗xg2 9.♙g1 ♗b7 10.e4 gives him an attack. [*Ig. B.*]

The imprecise move order chosen by Black has permitted White arrange his pieces happily in the manner recommended by Rubinstein as far back as the start of the present century: bishop on d3 and knight on e2. In the event of an exchange on c3 White can now recapture with his knight. He would have answered 6...♗b7 with 7.a3, and Black would have had to part with his dark-squared bishop – seeing that 7...♗e7 8.e4 is clearly bad for him. [*Is. B.*]

7.0–0 dxc4

The annotators unanimously censure this move and recommend 7...♗b7. One of them, writing in the weekly 64, says of the position after 8.cxd5 exd5 9.a3 ♗d6 10.b4: "Theory has long since established that the chances are about equal." There seems to be a slight misunderstanding here. In the position the theorists are talking about, the knight is on f3. The position with the knight on e2 instead is rarely seen, and theory does not pronounce judgement on it.

To me it seems that White is better off with the knight on e2 than on f3, as his e- and f-pawns are ensured greater mobility. For example: 10...♘bd7 11.♙b1 a6 12.f3 ♗e8 13.♙c2 ♙e7 14.g4 h6 15.♘g3 g6 16.♙g2 ♗ab8 17.h4 c5 18.g5 hxg5 19.hxg5 ♘h7 20.f4, and White stands better.

But is Black guaranteed an equal game by exchanging on c4? I do not think so. With 7...c5 8.cxd5 exd5 9.a3 ♖xc3 10.bxc3 ♕a6 he could have gone over to Botvinnik's variation, but this would not have promised him any special joy either. [*Is. B.*]

8.♖xc4 ♖b7 9.f3

An excellent move which not only limits the role of the bishop on b7 but also prepares the advance e3-e4, so as to secure active development for White's own bishop on c1. [*Ig. B.*]

9...c5

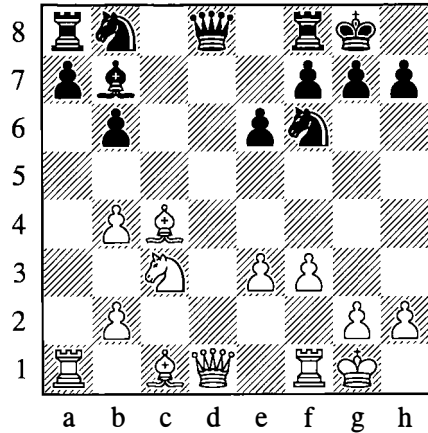
If we disregard the way the game continued, then this move looks satisfactory – Black is exerting influence on the centre, which is of particular importance after White's 9.f3. However, with subtle play Petrosian succeeds in exposing the shortcomings of his opponent's scheme. Black might therefore have done better to depart from Nimzo-Indian paths and simply play 9...♖e7, with ...c7-c5 to follow. [*Ig. B.*]

Black is heading for an exchanging operation that promises him nothing good. After 9...♖e7 10.e4 c5 11.♖e3 he would still stand worse, but at least he would keep his two bishops. [*Is. B.*]

10.a3 cxd4

With White's knight on e2 and his pawn on f3, the continuation 10...♖xc3 11.bxc3 would lead to a very difficult position for Black, as he would have nothing with which to oppose the powerful enemy pawn centre. [*Is. B.*]

11.axb4 dxc3 12.♖xc3



12...♖c6

It appears that after this move the game is already lost for Black, as the pawn on a7 now becomes a decisive weakness. It was imperative to play 12...a6. Admittedly it has been shown that by 13.e4 b5 14.♖b3 ♖b6† (if 14...♖c6 at once, then 15.♖e3 ♖d7 16.♖d6) 15.♖h1 ♖c6 16.♖g5 ♖xb4 17.♖xf6 gxf6 18.f4 White could obtain attacking chances in return for his pawn sacrifice. An alternative recommended by Igor Zaitsev is 13.♖d2 b5 14.♖b3 ♖c6 15.♖e2 ♖e7 16.♖e1; White succeeds in defending his b4-pawn, and acquires the better chances.

But all this cannot be compared to what happens in the game, when Black allows the advance b4-b5. [*Is. B.*]

I feel that Black was overestimating his lead in development. As is well known, a development advantage is temporary and “evaporates” if the opponent manages to complete his mobilization unimpeded. That is what happens in this game. On Petrosian's side, it is easy to recognize the positive factors that will gradually take effect: the two bishops, the open a-file and a superior position in the centre. If White carries out the advance e3-e4, then the bishop on b7 and the knight on f6 will both become “bad” pieces. Taking all this into account, I would like to suggest 12...♖d5, attacking the b4-pawn. If 13.b5, then 13...♖xc3 14.bxc3 ♖c7; while 13.♖xd5

is answered by 13...exd5, “restraining” the e3-e4 advance, fixing the pawn on e3 and confining the bishop on c1. [*Ig. B.*]

13.b5 ♖e5

There was no improvement in 13...♖a5 14.♙e2. Black would then have to reckon with the threat of b2-b4. It’s true that by 14...♞xd1 15.♞xd1 ♖b3 16.♞a3 ♖xc1 he could rid himself of his stranded knight, but White would be gaining several tempi for the attack on the a7-pawn. On the other hand after 14...♖d5 15.♙d2 Black’s position is clearly unsatisfactory. [*Is. B.*]

White would have the same answer to 13...♖a5. Black’s misfortune is that his cavalry has no good outposts. [*Ig. B.*]

14.♙e2 ♞c7

With 14...♖d5 15.♙d2 f5 Black could prevent the advance of the e-pawn, but this would not relieve his game. After 16.♖xd5 ♙xd5 17.♙c3 White’s bishop would be activated, and there would be more weaknesses in the black position than before. [*Is. B.*]

An exchange of queens is obviously not in Black’s interest. But the move he makes pursues no definite aim, and this allows Petrosian to shut the knight on f6 out of the game by executing the thematic advance of his centre pawn. It was therefore worth considering 14...♖d5, and if (for example) 15.♙d2, then 15...♞e7. A better reply, it seems to me, would be 15.♞d4, maintaining White’s positional pressure. [*Ig. B.*]

15.e4 ♞fd8

If Black wanted to check with his queen on c5, he should have done it at this point when White couldn’t interpose his own queen. All the same, after 15...♞c5† 16.♖h1 ♞fd8 17.♞e1 ♖d3 (there would appear to be nothing better) 18.♙xd3 ♞xd3 19.♞e2 ♞d7 20.♙e3 Black’s position would remain dubious. [*Ig. B., Is. B.*]

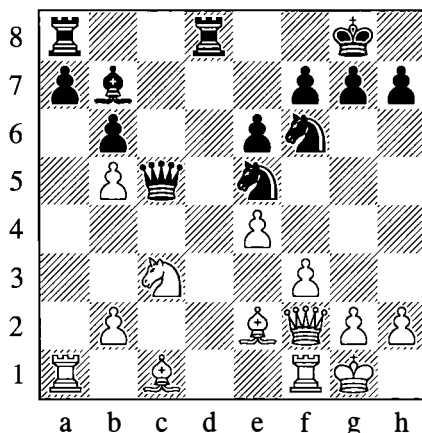
16.♞e1 ♞c5

We have already noted the poor position of both the bishop on b7 and the knight on f6. But if there was no way of helping the bishop, it *was* worth transferring the knight via d7 to c5. [*Ig. B.*]

A lapse, due to realizing that there is no longer any good continuation. Smyslov recommended bringing the knight from f6 to c5, but after 16...♖fd7 17.♞g3 ♖c5 18.♙f4 f6 19.♞ac1 Black’s position can in no way be called satisfactory. [*Is. B.*]

17.♞f2

White now can and does interpose, as he has no reason to avoid a queen exchange. [*Is. B.*]



17...♞e7

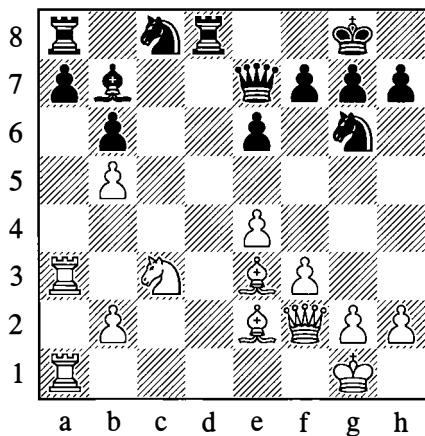
The queen’s “excursion” makes an odd impression of course, but exchanging on f2 would lead to great difficulties: 17...♞xf2† 18.♖xf2 ♖d3† 19.♙xd3 ♞xd3 20.♙e3 The weakness of the a7-pawn in the ending is highly unpleasant. Also after 17...♖d3 18.♙xd3 ♞xd3 19.♞xc5 bxc5 20.♙g5, White has excellent prospects. [*Ig. B.*]

18.♞a3

White prepares to double rooks on the a-file. Defending the a7-pawn is very difficult for Black. [*Ig. B., Is. B.*]

18...♖e8 19.♙f4 ♘g6 20.♙e3 ♘d6

On 20...♙b4, the continuation could be 21.♖b1 ♘e5 (not 21...♘d6? 22.♘a2) 22.♙f1 ♘d3 23.♙xd3 (23.♙c2 ♘c5 24.♖ba1 is also possible) 23...♖xd3 24.♖ba1, and White's win is only a matter of time. [*Ig. B., Is. B.*]

21.♖fa1 ♘c8

Black has everything defended, yet his position must be considered lost, as he has no counterplay at all and most of his pieces are badly placed. [*Ig. B.*]

22.♙f1

A useful move which, in particular, frees the e2-square for a possible transfer of the knight along the route c3-e2-d4. After that, White could switch his major pieces to the c-file for an invasion of his opponent's camp. [*Ig. B.*]

22...f5

This leads to a further weakening of his position and a rapid denouement, but passive defence didn't promise Black any saving chances either. [*Is. B.*]

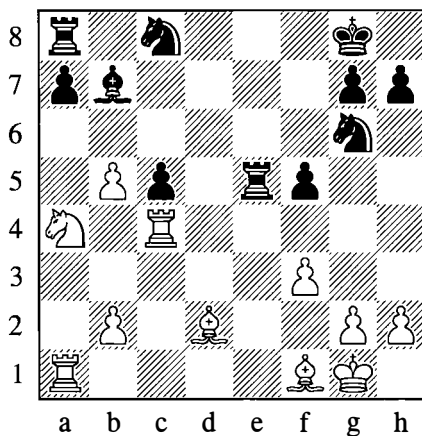
Spassky shows that he doesn't want to wait passively for his opponent to implement his plans. But the opening of the game merely plays into White's hands. [*Ig. B.*]

23.exf5 exf5 24.♖a4 ♖e8 25.♙d2 ♙c5

After the exchange of queens Black's situation is hopeless, but indicating the objectively best chance is not possible. [*Ig. B.*]

26.♙xc5 bxc5 27.♖c4 ♖e5 28.♘a4

There would be no point in giving scope to the bishop on b7 by winning the c5-pawn with 28.f4. [*Is. B.*]

**28...a6**

Spassky has lost all hope and offers no resistance. He could have prolonged the game by 28...♘b6. This might have led to an interesting endgame: 29.♖xc5 ♘xa4 30.♖xe5 ♘xe5 31.♖xa4 ♘d7 32.♙c4† ♘h8 (after 32...♘f8 33.♙b4† ♘e8 34.♖a1 Black would lose in a few moves) 33.♙e6 ♘b6 34.♖f4, winning a second pawn. [*Is. B.*]

29.♘xc5

To conclude, a small combination that gives White a decisive material plus. [*Ig. B.*]

29...axb5 30.♘xb7 ♖xa1 31.♖xc8† ♘f7 32.♘d8† ♘e7 33.♘c6† ♘d7 34.♘xe5† ♘xc8 35.♘xg6 hxg6 36.♙c3 ♖b1 37.♘f2 b4 38.♙xg7

Black resigned. Petrosian's best game in this match. [*Ig. B.*]

GAME 88

Boris Spassky – Tigran Petrosian

Moscow (11) 1969

Notes by Isaak Boleslavsky [*Is. B.*]
and Igor Bondarevsky [*Ig. B.*]

1.d4

For the fourth time running, Spassky plays a queen's pawn opening. He did so for the first time in game 5, after levelling the score. The effect of surprise (Petrosian had only been expecting 1.e4) undoubtedly played its part and helped the challenger to gain an important point.

When game 7 was played, the World Champion had still to recover from his two successive losses. His motto, therefore, was "Maximum solidity, no complications, no risk!" The result was a solid Slav Defence and a draw on the 27th move.

When Petrosian had to fight against the queen's pawn for the third time, it was in a critical situation. The consternation following his severe defeat in the 8th game prompted the extreme decision to employ a Benoni that was strategically dubious but conducive to a complex struggle.

And now Spassky once again begins the game with 1.d4. This time, however, the match situation is different. Petrosian is buoyed up: he saved the ninth game and has confidently won the tenth. The Champion again seeks a complex struggle, but he is more composed than he was before game nine. [*Is. B.*]

1...♢f6 2.c4 e6 3.♢f3

Spassky declines to play against the Nimzo-Indian Defence and prefers a Queen's Indian. This decision can likely be explained by the feeling of diffidence that may have come

over him after the two preceding games. At a different time the challenger would probably not have sidestepped an opening which has brought him a good many convincing victories. Moreover the 20th game of the previous match, as well as the 10th of this one, clearly showed what difficulties Black experiences. [*Is. B.*]

3...b6 4.a3

In the theatre lobby it was said that one master, arriving late for the start of the game, supposed it was Petrosian playing White. Indeed, the system chosen by Spassky has been employed repeatedly and successfully by his opponent. [*Ig. B.*]

Rather than the classical 4.g3, Spassky prefers a system worked out by Petrosian himself and employed by him several times in major contests. Spassky's psychological ploy consists in making the World Champion fight against his own weapon. It is well known, for instance, that many players who gladly adopt the Ruy Lopez with White feel uncomfortable playing that opening with Black. Many, but not all: Spassky himself plays the Ruy Lopez for either colour with success.

Was Spassky's psychological ploy justified? I don't think so. In the first place he was not familiar enough with the refinements of this system, as he had never played it before. Secondly, this system, though safe (White has to make several errors to be risking defeat), is nevertheless not active enough to set Black difficult problems. Thirdly, since Petrosian had many times had practical experience of this line, he knew what was the best deployment of forces for Black to adopt. [*Is. B.*]

4...♠b7 5.♠c3 d5

Black wants to develop his bishop on d6 where it will be more actively placed, but this move allows White, after 6.cxd5 exd5, to develop *his* dark-squared bishop outside the

pawn chain. Adhering to his preconceived scheme, Spassky neglects this possibility. [*Is. B.*]

6.e3

If White was intending to exchange pawns on d5 – as he did, one move later – then it was worth considering 6.cxd5 at once, so that after 6...exd5 he would have the option of developing his bishop on g5. In the event of 6...dxd5, he would continue with 7.e3. [*Ig. B.*]

6...d7

The most precise order of moves. On 6...e7 White can play 7.cxd5 exd5 8.b5†, and Black is forced to block his own bishop on b7, as 8...d7 is met by 9.d5. After 8...c6 9.d3 0-0 10.b4 d7 11.0-0, Black has to take into account a break in the centre with e3-e4. [*Is. B.*]

7.cxd5

White fixes the situation in the centre at an early stage. A more elastic move was 7.b4, so that apart from the exchange on d5 White would have another plan in reserve: c4-c5. The counter-thrust 7...c5 would hardly be in Black's interest: after 8.bxc5 bxc5 9.Bb1 the position of his bishop on b7 would become insecure. [*Is. B.*]

7...exd5 8.e2

This move is also imprecise. The bishop's position on e2 could only be justified if Black played ...c7-c5, allowing White to open the d-file. Against the plan that Petrosian selects, the bishop is better placed on d3, from where it defends the e4-square and may be transferred to f5.

If in answer to 8.d3 White didn't like 8...c5, he could have played 8.b4 first and brought his bishop out to d3 afterwards. [*Is. B.*]

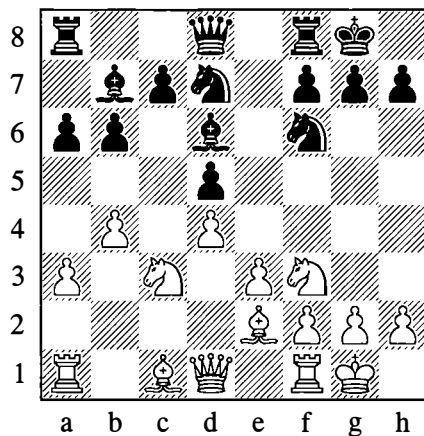
8...d6 9.b4 0-0

Eduard Gufeld recommends 9...d4. I feel that this foray is premature. After 10.Bb3 ddf6 11.d5, it's more trouble for Black to get rid of the knight on e5 than for White to get rid of the one on e4. If instead 10...xc3 11.Bxc3 a6 (countering White's plan of playing b4-b5 supported by a2-a4 to clamp down on the queenside) 12.b2 0-0, then White plays 13.d5 and is more actively placed than in the game. [*Is. B.*]

10.0-0

The result of the opening is that Black has a good position with the better prospects in the centre. All this, in my view, stems from the inopportune exchange on d5 and the moves a2-a3 and b2-b4. At this point 10...d4 deserved consideration. [*Ig. B.*]

10...a6



Both sides have finished their development. If White continues passively, then Black with his control of the e4-point may gradually work up an attack on the enemy king.

But Spassky does not of course intend to continue passively. He wishes to execute a plan that has become standard in similar positions. White aims to place his pawns on a4 and b5, clamping down on the c6-square. Then from

a3 he will exchange off the important bishop on d6, without which Black's kingside activities cannot be successful.

As we shall later see, the implementation of this plan comes up against great difficulties. In any case, it isn't clear whether White can gain an advantage even if he manages to carry his plan out in full. Thus, in Geller – Bobotsov, Moscow 1967, Black fell in with his opponent's intentions by playing ...a7-a5 (instead of ...a7-a6). White exchanged the dark-squared bishops and then the queens, but the game still quickly ended in a draw. [*Is. B.*]

11. ♖b3

White defends his b4-pawn in order to continue with a3-a4 followed by b4-b5, and then to exchange his dark-squared bishop by bringing it to a3. This plan takes several moves to execute, and Black gains an edge in the centre. It was therefore perhaps worth thinking about an immediate 11.b5, for example: 11...axb5 12. ♖xb5 ♙e7 13.a4. Black could avoid the exchange of dark-squared bishops by playing ...c7-c5, but in that case the bishop on c1 would find "employment", while the knight on b5 would be occupying an excellent post. [*Ig. B.*]

12... ♗e7!

It turns out that the bishop's presence on d6 is needed not only for controlling e5. By taking the b4-pawn in his sights, Black hampers his opponent's plans. [*Is. B.*]

12. ♖b1

After this move, White will no longer be able to exchange the dark-squared bishops. But without that exchange, the advance of the a- and b-pawns loses its point and merely helps Black to seize the initiative on the queenside. Why did Spassky refrain from playing 12.b5 at once? In the event of 12...a5 13.a4, White would not only have saved a tempo – he would

have made the bishop exchange unavoidable. Obviously Spassky wasn't keen on the variation 12...axb5 13. ♖xb5 c5. If then 14. ♖xd6 ♗xd6 15.dxc5 bxc5!, the bishop on b7 is invulnerable (if White takes it, he loses his queen).

It must be agreed, then, that after 12.b5 axb5 13. ♖xb5 Black would obtain active play. All the same, White would be better able to count on equality than in the actual game. [*Is. B.*]

12... ♖e4

A consequence of White's 12. ♖b1. Black can carry out this sortie without fear of losing his d-pawn, as 13. ♖xd5 can be met by 13... ♙xd5 14. ♗xd5 ♖c3. [*Is. B.*]

13.a4 ♖df6

On 13... ♙xb4, the continuation could be 14. ♖xe4 (Black has the better position after 14. ♖xd5 ♙xd5 15. ♗xb4 ♗xb4 16. ♖xb4 a5 17. ♖b2 ♖c3) 14...dxe4 15. ♗xb4 c5 16.dxc5 exf3 17. ♙xf3 ♙xf3 18.gxf3, with approximate equality. [*Ig. B.*]

14.b5

White has only accomplished part of his plan, and in the centre Black has the ascendancy. The bishop on c1 remains "penned in". [*Ig. B.*]

14... ♖xc3 15. ♗xc3 ♖e4 16. ♗c2

A better square for the queen would be b3. [*Ig. B.*]

16... ♖fc8

Controlling the centre, Black turns to operations on the queenside, where his opponent's pieces are not well placed. [*Ig. B.*]

17. ♙b2

If White tries 17. ♖d2 to exchange off the knight on e4, there can follow 17...axb5 18.axb5 c5! 19. ♖xe4 cxd4 20. ♗d3 dxe4 21. ♗xd4 ♙e5 with a clear advantage to Black.

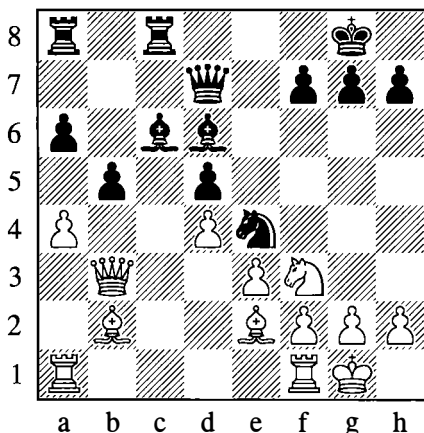
since 22.♟xb6 is bad on account of 22...♞cb8. It may be added that 18.♞xe4 in this line also leaves White with a difficult position after 18...dxe4 19.axb5 ♙d5 20.♙c4 c6 21.♟b3 ♟e6. [*Is. B.*]

17...c6 18.bxc6 ♙xc6 19.♟b3 ♟d7 20.♞a1

The continuation 20.♞fc1 ♙xa4 21.♟xb6 ♙b5 would lead to a situation like the one examined in the note to White's next move.

On 20.♞e5, Black has 20...♙xe5 21.dxe5 ♞cb8, with threats of 22...♙xa4, 22...♞c5 and 22...♞d2. [*Is. B.*]

20...b5



21.a5

After this move it becomes clear that Black has won the queenside battle. Hence he already holds the advantage, properly speaking, across the entire board. The continuation 21.axb5 ♙xb5 22.♙xb5 ♟xb5 23.♟xb5 axb5 24.♞xa8 ♞xa8 25.♞a1 ♞xa1† 26.♙xa1 would have given a position where White still has adequate resources. [*Ig. B.*]

Black now has excellent winning chances with his protected passed pawn on b5 and the powerful outpost for a rook on c4. To explain Spassky's decision, we can only assume that he considered the ending after 21.axb5 ♙xb5 22.♙xb5 ♟xb5 23.♟xb5 axb5 24.♞xa8 ♞xa8

25.♞a1 ♞xa1† 26.♙xa1 to be dangerous.

And yet White would scarcely be in danger of defeat:

(a) 26...b4 27.♞f1 b3 28.♙b2 ♙b4 29.♞e5 ♙c3 30.♞d3 ♙xb2 31.♞xb2 ♞d2† 32.♞e2 ♞c4 33.♞xc4 dxc4 34.♞d2 b2 35.♞c2 c3 36.e4, and the pawn endgame is drawn.

(b) 26...♙a3 27.♞e1 b4 28.♞c2 ♞d2 29.♙c3!. It must be said that in a player's advance calculations, a move like 29.♙c3 can be easy to miss, and hence Spassky's decision to seek chances in the middlegame becomes comprehensible. [*Is. B.*]

21...♙b7

It looked tempting to play 21...b4 followed by 22...♙b5. After 22.♞e5 ♙xe5 23.dxe5 ♙b5! (23...♞d2 is less good, as after 24.♟xb4 the extra exchange is very difficult to exploit) 24.♙xb5 ♟xb5, White would hardly be able to offer prolonged resistance. Petrosian prefers to retain his light-squared bishop and takes a much more complicated route to victory. [*Is. B.*]

As I see it, a clearer way to exploit the advantage that Black has acquired lay in 21...b4 followed by 22...♙b5 – in order, after the exchange of bishops, to secure the c4-point for an invasion. Withdrawing the bishop to b7 is highly characteristic of Petrosian. At this stage he already appears to have had an exchange sacrifice on c4 in mind, but for now the bishop on b7 remains “bad”. [*Ig. B.*]

22.♞e5

Realizing he is in a bad way, Spassky tries to complicate matters with a tactical thrust. If now 22...♙xe5 23.dxe5 ♞d2, then 24.♟b4 ♞xf1 25.♙g4. [*Ig. B.*]

22...♟d8

Spassky is nearly proved right. To his first tactical stroke, his opponent reacts ineffectively; 22...♟e7 was better. Why did I

say “nearly”? Because Spassky now neglects the interesting possibility of 23.♔d3, threatening 24.♕xe4. After 23...♖d2 24.♕xh7† ♕f8 (if 24...♕xh7, then 25.♖d3† ♖e4 26.♖xf7 ♖e7 27.♖xd6 ♖xd6 28.f3) 25.♖d3 ♖xf1 (on 25...♖c4, the simple 26.♕c1 is good) 26.♖xf1, White has a pawn for the exchange. There could follow, for example, 26...g6 27.♖xf7, or 26...♕xe5 27.dxe5 g6 28.f4. Although the advantage would remain with Black, some interesting complications would have been set in train. [*Ig. B.*]

Black is right to avoid the complications arising from 22...♕xe5 23.dxe5 ♖d2 24.♖b4 ♖xf1 25.♕g4. On 25...♖c4, there follows 26.♖xc4 bxc4 27.♕xd7 ♖d2 28.♕c3; White succeeds in blockading the enemy pawns, and stands no worse. On the other hand after 25...♖c6 26.♕xc8 ♖xc8, White avoids 27.♖c1? which loses to 27...♖xc1 28.♕xc1 ♖xc1 29.f3 ♖xe3† 30.♕f2 ♖f5 31.g4 ♖c4!, and continues instead with 27.♖xf1 d4 28.f3 dxe3 29.♖d4; he then has quite good drawing chances.

In the pages of *Moscow Chess*, Efim Geller stated the opinion that Black should have played 22...♖e7. He claimed that 22...♖d8 was inaccurate, as White could now have obtained good counter-chances with 23.♔d3. This is true only if Black is tempted by the win of the exchange. Thus, 23...♖d2? is met by 24.♕xh7†! ♕xh7 (the complications resulting from 24...♕f8 25.♖d3 are not unfavourable to White) 25.♖d3† ♖e4 26.♖xf7 ♖e7 27.♖xd6 ♖xd6 28.f3, giving White a clear plus.

But what can White gain from 23.♔d3 if Black plays 23...♖e7 in reply? Exchanging on e4 only makes matters worse, as the diagonal of the bishop on b7 is lengthened and the white knight is deprived of a retreat square. If instead 24.f3, then 24...♖c5 and White loses a pawn, whether he captures on c5 or makes a queen move (answered by 25...♖a4). [*Is. B.*]

23.♖fd1 ♖h4

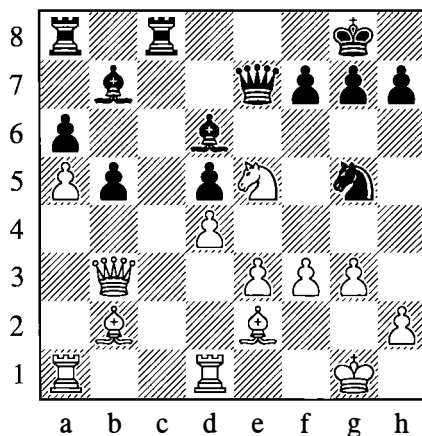
This move was not properly appreciated when the game was being played. Black induces a weakening of the light squares on the kingside, after which the planned invasion with his rook on c4 gains considerably in strength. [*Ig. B.*]

24.g3 ♖e7 25.f3

It's natural that Spassky should try to cover the weakened light squares in his castled position. [*Ig. B.*]

This and White's next move weaken his kingside still further, but it isn't clear whether he could have held the position with passive tactics. Simplification would lead to an ending that is bad for him – Black after all has a strong passed b-pawn, and the white pawn on a5 would be hard to defend. [*Is. B.*]

25...♖g5



26.h4

But this exposes the king too much. It was worth considering 26.♕a3, in order finally to get rid of the bad bishop; for example 26...b4 27.♕xb4, or 26...♕xa3 27.♖xa3 b4 28.♖a4. [*Ig. B.*]

White hastens to drive the knight back while the black pawn is still on f7 and the knight cannot head for d6 by the direct route.

On 26.♙a3, Black could continue 26...♙xa3 27.♞xa3 f6 28.♘g4 ♞c4! and invade on the c-file. [Is. B.]

26...♘e6 27.f4

Another unnecessary weakening. Again White should have played 27.♙a3. [Ig. B.]

27...f6 28.♘f3

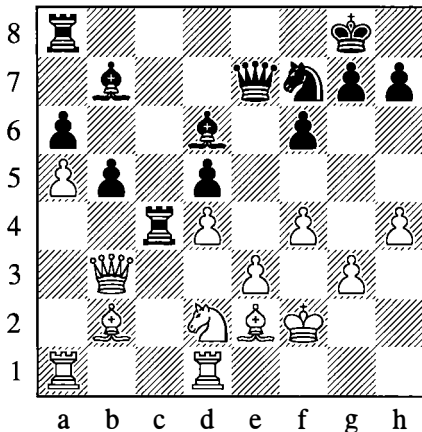
On 28.♘d3, Black could increase the pressure by 28...♞c4. [Ig. B.]

In the event of 28.♘d3 there could follow: 28...♘f8 29.♙f2 ♞e8 30.♘e1 ♞ac8 31.♘f3 ♙b4 32.♞d3 (the threat was 32...♙c3) 32...♞c4 33.♘d2 ♘d7, and White is no better off than in the game. [Is. B.]

28...♘d8!

The knight was not well placed on e6, so it heads “into the fray”, to d6 or h6 via f7. [Ig. B.]

29.♙f2 ♘f7 30.♘d2 ♞c4



Finally the exchange sacrifice, conceived long in advance, comes about! [Ig. B.]

Taking the rook is bad of course, but will White be able to endure its presence in his camp for long? [Is. B.]

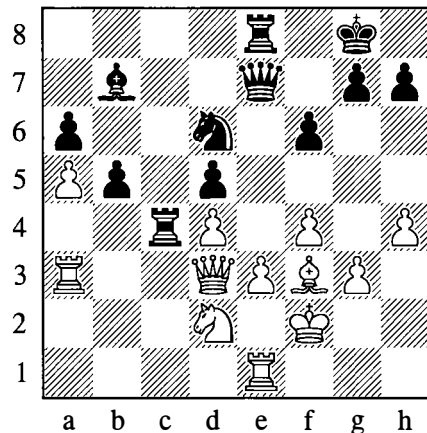
31.♞d3

After 31.♙xc4 dxc4 32.♞c2 ♞c8 Black would have two excellent bishops and two united passed pawns, with the white king's position seriously weakened. The outcome of the battle would therefore be clear. Taking on c4 with the knight would be no better either. [Ig. B.]

31...♞e8 32.♙f3 ♙b4

The dark-squared bishop has fulfilled its role, and Black can consent to its exchange; the square d6 needs to be freed for the knight. [Is. B.]

33.♙a3 ♙xa3 34.♞xa3 ♘d6 35.♞e1



35...f5

A far from obvious move, demonstrating Petrosian's deep insight into the secrets of the position. The weakening of e5 is irrelevant, as the white knight cannot contrive to reach that square.

Black's idea is to thrust to e4 with his knight, which will inevitably be captured, and then to retake with the f-pawn, opening a road for his queen into the opponent's camp. [Is. B.]

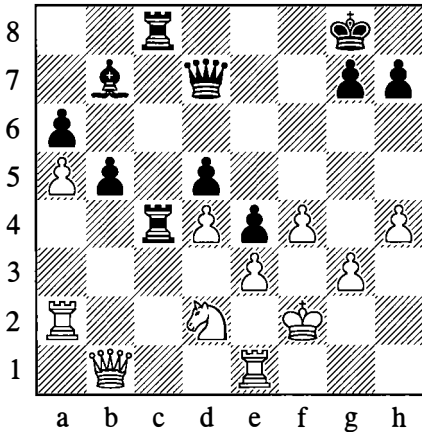
36.♞a1 ♘e4†

White would answer 36...♞e8 with 37.♘b3, threatening to bar the c-file. Black would therefore have to continue with 37...♘e4†,

but after 38.♙xe4 fxe4 the white queen could retreat to d1, which is clearly a better square for it than b1.

It follows that Black should not delay the invasion; 36...♘e4† is the strongest move. [*Is. B.*]

37.♙xe4 fxe4 38.♚b1 ♖d7 39.♙a2 ♜ec8



40.♘xc4

There was no adequate defence in 40.♘b3 either, on account of 40...♗h3. Then on 41.♙h1, Gufeld gave the following variation: 41...♜c2† 42.♙xc2 ♜xc2† 43.♗xc2 ♗xh1 44.♗c7 ♗f3† Black succeeds in picking up the pawns on e3 and g3 with check, and then returning with his queen to c8. If instead of 41.♙h1 White plays 41.♙g1, there follows 41...♜c3 42.♘c5 ♜8xc5 43.dxc5 d4, with irresistible threats. [*Is. B.*]

40...dxc4 41.d5

A desperate attempt to bring his rooks to life. On 41.♗b4, Black could play 41...c3 42.♜c2 ♜c4 43.♗b3 ♗g4 44.♜xc3 ♗f3† 45.♘g1 ♗xg3† 46.♘f1 ♗f3† 47.♘g1 ♙d5 48.♜ec1 ♗xe3†!, winning quickly. [*Is. B.*]

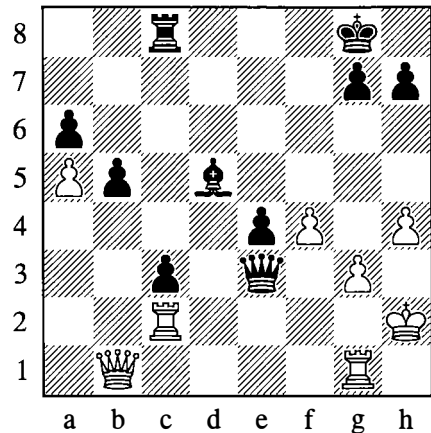
The last chance for White lay in 41.♗b4, for example: 41...c3 42.♜c2 ♜c4 43.♗b3, or 41...♗g4 42.♗e7 ♗f3† 43.♘g1 ♗xg3† 44.♙g2 ♗xe1† 45.♘h2. But after (say) 41...♙d5,

envisaging both 42...c3 and penetration with the queen on the light squares of the kingside, Black should win. [*Ig. B.*]

41...♙xd5 42.♙d1 c3!

The sealed move. Black combines an attack on the king with the advance of his passed pawns. The threat is 43...♙xa2 44.♗xa2† ♗f7. [*Is. B.*]

43.♜c2 ♗h3 44.♙g1 ♗g4 45.♘g2 ♗f3† 46.♘h2 ♗xe3



White has managed to secure his king for the moment, but at too great a cost. [*Is. B.*]

47.f5

The main line that we examined in our adjournment analysis was 47.♗d1 ♗d3 48.♗g4. Then apart from the quiet 48...♙f8, a forced variation is possible: 48...♗xc2† 49.♙g2 ♗xg2† 50.♘g2 e3† 51.♘h2 ♜e8 52.h5 (52.♗d7 ♙f7) 52...h6 (not 52...e2? 53.h6 g6 54.♗d7 ♙f7 55.♗d4) 53.f5 ♜e4 54.♗d1 (or 54.♗g6 ♙f7 55.♗xa6 e2) 54...♙f7 55.♗d3 ♜e8 56.♗xc3 e2 57.♗e1 b4.

White's attempt to do something on the kingside with 47.f5 is simply ignored by Black, who pushes his passed pawns. [*Is. B.*]

47...♗c5 48.♙f1 b4 49.f6 b3 50.♜cf2 c2

51.♖c1 e3 52.f7† ♕f8 53.♟f5 b2 54.♖xb2
c1=♖ 55.♖xg7† ♕xg7 56.♟g5†

And White resigned without waiting for his opponent's reply. [*Is. B.*]

0–1

GAME 89

Tigran Petrosian – Boris Spassky

Moscow (20) 1969

Notes by Isaak Boleslavsky [*Is. B.*]
and Igor Bondarevsky [*Ig. B.*]

You might have thought that Petrosian's loss in the 19th game would demoralize him for good and make further resistance a mere formality. Yet the World Champion plays the present game in high spirits, and once again demonstrates his positional mastery. In my view he was helped by Spassky himself, who unexpectedly took a time-out after game 19, postponing the next encounter by two days and thus enabling his opponent to collect himself.

But then perhaps Spassky too required some time to calm the excitement that had seized him when the summit of the chess Olympus came dazzlingly close. [*Is. B.*]

1.c4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘f3 ♗e7

The Tarrasch Defence has already played its role in this match – the role of a not very solid opening that provokes White into playing for a win. Spassky now endeavours to construct a sound position and reduce the element of risk to a minimum. Having learnt from the experience of game 14, the challenger refines the order of his moves and doesn't allow his opponent to sidestep the system that has long been expected to make its appearance in this match. [*Is. B.*]

In many ways the course of the struggle in

this game was determined by Spassky's two-point lead. In the first place Spassky renounces the Tarrasch Defence, although in the 18th game it had given him good play. It is perfectly understandable that the score in the match made him disinclined to seek sharp situations. Moreover after two months of battle demanding one hundred per cent expenditure of energy and nerves, it was hard to place reliance on a great creative effort at the chessboard – and the Tarrasch usually produces situations with a very high price on every move. The dynamic nature of the positions requires each move to be approached with extreme concentration. But when a player is tired, tactical vision is the first thing to suffer; positional judgement, according to my own observations, begins to “decay” only later.

Hence the choice of a “mainstream” defence on Spassky's part will hardly have surprised anybody. And yet his subsequent play made a strange impression on everyone. It was as if someone else had taken his place. For a long time he was, as chessplayers put it, merely “making moves”, without showing any activity, any ideas. As a result of course he suffered defeat, and the outcome of the match became unclear once more – owing not so much to the dropped point as to the after-taste which Spassky was bound to take away from this loss. [*Ig. B.*]

4.♘c3 ♘f6 5.♗g5

At this point, exchanging on d5 would give White nothing; after 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 c6 Black would be able to post his bishop on f5. [*Is. B.*]

5...0–0 6.e3 h6

The Tartakower Variation had been employed by Spassky in the 2nd game of the previous match, so it had become part of his openings arsenal. On that occasion he had not succeeded in equalizing, and the line was not

seen again in that match. But then Spassky also proceeded to abandon all other varieties of Queen's Gambit. In the present match, where the Queen's Gambit was not just Spassky's chief weapon with Black but his only one, the Tartakower Variation could be expected to occupy an appropriate place. The fact that it made its appearance so late is explained above all by the role of the Tarrasch Defence, which had been seen five times. Spassky had evidently intended to play the Tartakower Variation as early as game six (where 5...h6 6.♘h4 0–0 occurred), but instead of 7.e3 Petrosian played 7.♙c1, intimating that on 7...b6 he aimed to continue with 8.cxd5 ♖xd5 9.♙xe7 ♜xe7 10.♖xd5 exd5 11.g3. That line was not to Spassky's liking, so with 7...♖e4 he went over to a good version of Lasker's Defence.

In game 14, Petrosian anticipated Spassky's intentions by leaving his knight on b1 and unexpectedly exchanging on d5; what resulted was not the Tartakower Variation but the so-called Orthodox Fianchetto.

Now that Spassky is two points ahead, the Tartakower suits him better than ever, and by adjusting his order of moves to circumvent all Petrosian's opening "trickery", he forces him into playing this system.

What is Petrosian to do now? There is no point in going into the classical continuations, where it would be too hard to convert his microscopic opening edge into the point that he so badly needs. Petrosian takes the decision to part with his dark-squared bishop and take the game into paths that are little investigated. [*Is. B.*]

7.♙xf6

With this exchange White can hardly count on an opening advantage. It seems to me that players resort to this method not out of theoretical considerations, but in an effort to reach particular positions that correspond to their own taste and style.

Subsequently a pawn structure characteristic of the Carlsbad Variation usually arises, and in a quiet game White conducts operations on the queenside.

For that reason White's choice of this system is easy to understand. A position arises which, as I see it, is more in keeping with Petrosian's style than with the creative aspirations of his opponent.

In addition it must be borne in mind that Petrosian was naturally trying to impose his own will on the opening. In the event of 7.♘h4, he could not know what would follow. Would it be the system with 7...b6, or Lasker's Defence which had already been adopted in game six? Or perhaps Black had decided to play the Orthodox Defence? With the choice that he makes at this moment, Petrosian is steering the struggle into a channel that suits him. [*Ig. B.*]

7...♙xf6 8.♜d2

The aim of this move is to make the freeing advance ...c7-c5 more difficult. This aim is accomplished by pressure against the d5-pawn, which White can intensify by placing his rook on d1.

If on the other hand Black carries out the plan of capturing on c4 and pushing with ...e6-e5, White will be able to seize control of the opened d-file. [*Is. B.*]

8...b6

The most logical continuation, in keeping with the ideas of the system Spassky has chosen. Once the d5-point is fortified, the ...c7-c5 advance can come back onto the agenda. [*Is. B.*]

9.cxd5

Before making this exchange, White would have liked to wait until the black bishop was on b7, so as to avoid giving the latter a choice – but it isn't clear what other move he should

have played now. Committing his queen's rook to a particular square makes no sense at present, but in answer to a bishop move Black could capture on c4 and secure the long diagonal for his own bishop. Similarly in reply to 9.b4 Black could play 9...dxc4 10.gxc4 c5, freeing his game easily. [Is. B.]

White settles for a sturdy pawn position in the centre. Instead 9.0-0-0 would bring about a sharp situation that Petrosian was evidently not aiming for. [Ig. B.]

9...exd5 10.b4

With this move White forestalls the freeing advance ...c7-c5 for the long term. Later by placing his rooks on the c-file, he will obtain pressure against the c6-point. [Is. B.]

10...g6

It was worth considering 10...g6. Then after (for example) 11.g3 c6 12.0-0 Qd6 13.Bab1 Qd7, the advance of the c-pawn would again become a realistic prospect. White's next move makes it impracticable. [Is. B.]

11.Bb1

White is highly consistent. Black can no longer even think about ...c7-c5. He could have answered 11.b5 with 11...a6, and White's pawn on b5 could not have been maintained. Now, however, Black *does* have to reckon with b4-b5 which in effect would isolate the d5-pawn. For example, 11...Qd7 12.b5 c5 13.bxc6 gxc6 14.g6 is in White's favour. [Ig. B.]

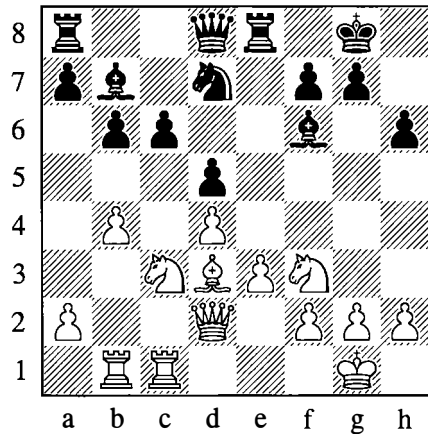
11...c6

If now 12.b5, then 12...c5. [Is. B.]

12.g3 Qd7 13.0-0 Re8 14.Bfc1

White's plan consists of play on the queenside, where the black position has a defect – the pawn on c6. It would therefore be illogical to begin operations in the centre,

for example: 14.e4 dxe4 (14...c5 looks more active, but after 15.Qxd5 White has a positional advantage) 15.Qxe4 (or 15.gxe4) 15...Qf8, and pawn weaknesses have appeared on White's side also. [Ig. B.]



14...a5

Spassky initiates counterplay on the queenside, but a different plan deserved serious attention: the inactive bishop on f6 could be transferred via e7 to d6, where it could be used for operations on the kingside. [Ig. B.]

Spassky evidently reckoned that Petrosian would reply 15.a3, on the lines of game six. Then 15...axb4 16.axb4 b5 would follow, and by bringing his knight via b6 to c4 Black should rid himself of all difficulties. But in the sixth game Petrosian had only been trying to avoid losing, after suffering two defeats in a row; whereas now he needed to win at any cost.

Black had a plan available that is typical of such positions: transfer the bishop to d6, and the knight via f6 to e4. What could White do to oppose this? Pushing the a-pawn to a5 gives very little, while b4-b5 always comes up against ...c6-c5. White would have to carry out a central break with e3-e4, but this would lead to simplification and offer few chances of success. [Is. B.]

15.bxa5! ♖xa5 16.♗f5

Pressure against the b6-pawn commences. There is already a threat of 17.♗xd7 and 18.♞xb6. Black cannot reply 16...b5, on account of 17.♗xd5 cxd5 18.♗xd7. [*Ig. B.*]

16...♞a6 17.♞b3 g6

Black forces the bishop to choose the wing on which it wants to station itself. [*Is. B.*]

18.♗d3

Now the pawn on b6 is safely guarded by the knight on d7. In my view, 18.♗h3 would be more in keeping with White's plan. Then Black's best defence would be 18...♞e7. Other replies are weaker: 18...♗f8 19.♞cb1 ♗a8 (the threat was 20.♞b2, and 19...b5 fails to 20.a4) 20.♞d3, or 18...♗a8 19.a4 ♗f8 20.♞d3. [*Ig. B.*]

White is making his opponent's defence easier. After 18.♗h3 the black rook would remain fettered to the b6-pawn, and the bishop on b7 would be tied to the defence of the rook. Thus, 18...♗a8 would be met by 19.a4 (not 19.♞e2 at once, on account of 19...b5), and if 19...♗f8, then 20.♞e2 ♗b7 21.♞b2 and Black loses a pawn. Instead of 19...♗f8 in this line, Black can play 19...♗b8, defending the rook on a6 and the pawn on c6. However, the knight's retreat to b8 is just the positional concession that White is seeking to induce (and does eventually bring about).

Evidently in answer to 18.♗h3 Black would have to neutralize the enemy bishop's action by playing 18...♗g7 19.♞cb1 f5. But the ...f7-f5 advance seriously weakens the kingside. After 20.g3 the white bishop could easily return to its starting position, while the black pawn, alas, could no longer get back to f7. [*Is. B.*]

18...♞a7 19.♞cb1

This is too important a game for Petrosian to be resolving on the 19.e4 break without the assurance that it will lead to a win. Indeed,

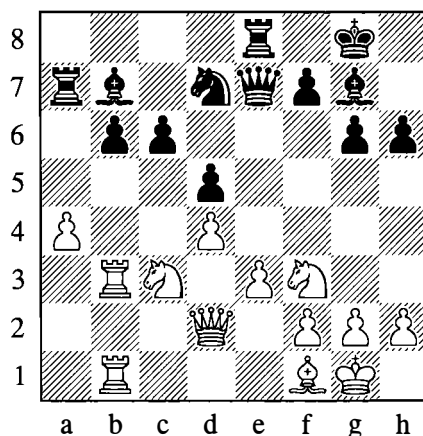
after 19...dxe4 20.♗xe4 ♗g7 21.♗d6 ♞e6, there is nothing clear for White and the game is considerably simplified. [*Is. B.*]

19...♗g7

This move was condemned by many commentators, and not without reason. Admittedly the bishop on g7 is fulfilling two functions: it covers the e5-square and defends the pawn on h6 in case of a possible e3-e4. But the h6-pawn could be defended from g7 quite safely by the king; while by bringing his bishop round to c7 to protect the b6-pawn, Spassky could have demonstrated that his queenside position was sound. [*Is. B.*]

20.a4

Here the pawn is more vulnerable than on a2, but then the black b6-pawn mustn't be allowed to advance as soon as one of the white rooks leaves the b-file. [*Is. B.*]

20...♞e7 21.♗f1**21...♗a6?**

White's 21.♗f1 pursued two aims: to free the d3-square for the knight and also, after 22.g3, to transfer the bishop to h3. An exchange of bishops in no way impedes the knight's manoeuvre to d3, while White's other threat is eliminated at too high a price. Up to now,

the c6-pawn has been practically invulnerable and Black has had only one weakness – on b6. Yet after the bishop exchange, there will be two weaknesses for him to defend. White's bishop, to be sure, is the "good" one and Black's is the "bad" one, but it has been playing an important defensive role.

It was worth considering 21...♖a5. White's threat to bring his bishop to h3 could easily be prevented by placing the queen on e6, and Black's position would remain sound. [*Is. B.*]

There are two weaknesses in Black's position – the hanging pawns on c6 and b6, which are at a distance from the centre and therefore lack dynamic power. But at the moment they are adequately defended and difficult to pressurize. Meanwhile the white a4-pawn is also weak, and if the game should open up, Black's two bishops will demonstrate their power. Overall, in my view, the chances of the two sides are about equal. Black could have continued with 21...♝e6, so as to transfer his bishop to d6. Subsequently, sharp play could arise after an advance of the c-pawn.

The exchange of bishops is positionally motivated, since the bishop on f1 is the "good" one and its opposite number is the "bad" one. Nevertheless, after this exchange, the c6-pawn will be easier to attack in the absence of its faithful guard. [*Ig. B.*]

22.h4

Up to now, all the attention of both opponents has been fixed on the queenside. The bishop exchange has given White chances in precisely that sector of the board. Why, then, is a thrust on the kingside needed?

Before commencing operations on the queenside, Petrosian is stabilizing the situation on the other wing. He has decided that the most solid formation will be one with pawns on f2-g3-h4 and the king on g2.

Following the bishop exchange, the light squares in Black's camp will need defending.

If circumstances permit, White may play h4-h5, either weakening Black's king position or gaining control of the f5-point. It is this possibility that Black's 23rd move serves to avert. [*Is. B.*]

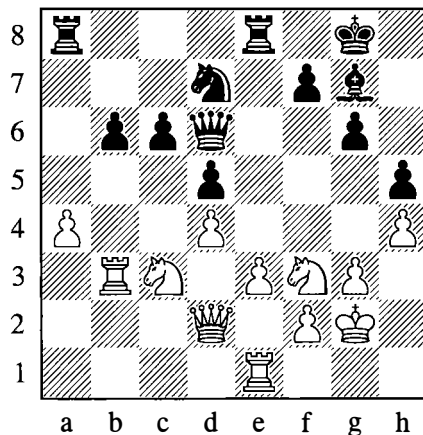
When this move was played, it seemed to me to be bad. But later I saw it accompanied by two exclamation marks in the chess press and read a commentary on it couched in suitably glowing terms. This made me come back to the present position and evaluate it anew. But my opinion did not change. Such a move cannot be good. White is weakening his kingside to no useful purpose, and this gives Black a basis for creating counterplay. After 22.♙xa6, White's position would deserve preference. [*Ig. B.*]

22...♙xf1 23.♞xf1 h5

An antipositional move. Of his own accord Black has prepared excellent posts for his opponent's knights – on f4 and g5. Petrosian now consolidates his position and has the better chances.

Black should have played 23...♝e6 and answered 24.g3 by penetrating with his queen: after 24...♝h3 25.♞c1 ♝e6! 26.♘e2 ♝f5 27.♘f4 ♞f6 White has nothing better than 28.♝c2 ♝xc2 29.♞xc2 ♞xa4 30.♘e5, which leads to simplification and a probable draw. [*Ig. B.*]

24.♞e1 ♞aa8 25.g3 ♝d6 26.♔g2



White's kingside formation is completed, and the time has come to proceed with operations on the other wing. For the moment, though, Black has everything defended. [*Is. B.*]

26...♟f8

From this moment on, Spassky begins to “mark time”. He undertakes no action, evidently reckoning that his position is sufficiently robust and cannot be breached. Strictly speaking White possesses nothing substantial, but if he is not disturbed he will gradually be able to build up pressure in the c-file – and Black has to be constantly on his guard. A possibility was 26...c5. [*Is. B.*]

This move shows that Spassky considers his position to be completely safe and sees no need to alter the arrangement of his pieces. Igor Platonov recommends transferring the bishop to d6. To me it seems that this would not rid Black of his difficulties. Since the light-squared bishops were exchanged, the main weakness in Black's position has been the pawn on c6, and the bishop on d6 would be doing nothing to help in its defence. Here is how the game might proceed in that event: 26...♟f8 27.♞c1 ♞f6 (with the h-pawn no longer on h6, the position of the queen on e6 would be insecure) 28.♞d1 ♟d6 29.♟e2 ♞ec8 30.♞bc3, and the black pieces will be tied down while the white knight heads via e1 and d3 towards f4 or b4. [*Is. B.*]

27.♞eb1 ♟g8 28.♞d1 ♟f8

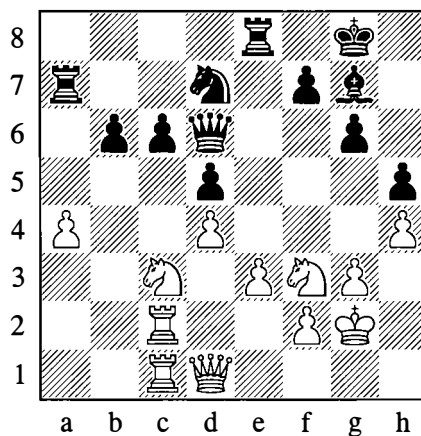
It looks as if Black *has* decided to bring the bishop to d6, but in fact this is merely a second instance of his repeating moves. He cannot eliminate the organic defects of his position, but he should nonetheless have placed his bishop on h6, so as to cover f4. [*Is. B.*]

29.♞b2 ♟g7 30.♞c2 ♞a7

Black's play makes a certain impression of listlessness, although Spassky cannot have failed to sense the approaching danger.

An improvement was 30...♟h6 31.♞bc1 ♞a5, so as to answer 32.♟e2 with 32...c5 – though this continuation doesn't at all solve the problems of the defence, and can be recommended only as the least of the evils. White continues with 33.♟c3, when pushing the pawn to c4 would be bad for Black – it gives a position where he has no counterplay at all, while White has a clear plan for exploiting his positional plus: he doubles rooks on the b-file and brings about an exchange on b5, after which Black cannot hold out against the combined attack on his b- and d-pawns. A better move than 33...c4 is 33...♟g7. Black's chances of getting off with the loss of a pawn, and remaining with three pawns against four on the kingside, would then be much greater than in the actual game. [*Is. B.*]

31.♞bc1



31...♟b8

Positional capitulation; now Black will never be able to push his pawn to c5. The better 31...♟h6 was still an option, but Spassky had very little time left and was only concerned to avoid immediate material losses. [*Is. B.*]

Despite his passive play, Spassky's position was still defensible. But at this point a “conventional” move, 31...♞aa8, was actually in order. The idea is that if the knight moves

away from c3, Black replies ...c6-c5, but otherwise he can prepare that advance by playing his other rook to d8.

The voluntary retreat of the knight turns Black's position into a lost one. [*Ig. B.*]

32.♖e2 ♜c7 33.♞d3 ♝a7 34.♞b3 ♝a6 35.♖f4

White is transferring his knight to e5 to increase the pressure on the c6-pawn. [*Ig. B.*]

Having arranged his major pieces in the best way, White proceeds to the final part of his plan – the decisive redeployment of his knight. [*Is. B.*]

35...♞d8 36.♖d3 ♜f8

Black can't allow the knight to reach b4; if 36...♞c8 37.♖b4 ♝a5, then 38.♖xc6 ♖xc6 39.♞xb6, and White wins. But now the other knight plants itself on e5. [*Is. B.*]

37.♖fe5 ♞c8 38.♞c3

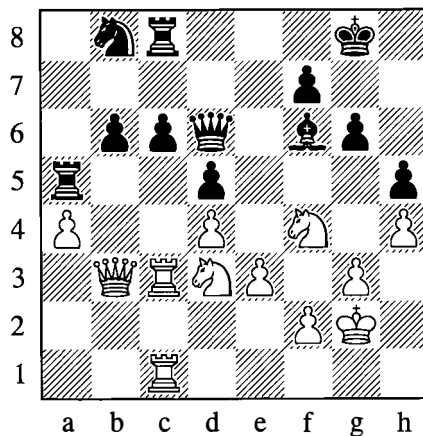
White doesn't have to hurry, as his opponent is tied up. He makes it possible to triple major pieces on the c-file, in case this should be useful. Of course, 38.♖f4 at once was also playable. [*Is. B.*]

38...♜e7 39.♖f4 ♜f6 40.♖ed3

Right now Petrosian didn't like 40.♖xd5 ♜xe5 41.dxe5 ♞xe5 42.♖xb6 ♞d8, as Black's pieces would come to life. [*Ig. B.*]

If Petrosian had had more time, he might have played 40.♖xc6 ♞xc6 41.♞xc6 ♖xc6 42.♞b5 ♖b8 43.♞c8† ♔g7 44.♞xb8. But with one move to make and your flag dangling, you don't want to calculate such variations – especially since this combination is not at all necessary. After the move played, Black cannot defend against the threats of 41.♖xd5 and 41.♖b4. [*Is. B.*]

40...♝a5



At this point the game was adjourned, and White sealed. The most natural move appeared to be 41.♖b4, after which Black loses his d5-pawn, but Petrosian prefers a different method. [*Is. B.*]

Analysis showed that Black's position was hopeless. His attempt to muddy the waters upon resumption was only a slim practical chance. [*Ig. B.*]

41.♞xb6 ♝xa4 42.♞c5!

It is only this strong move that justifies White's rejection of 41.♖b4; he not only wins a pawn but breaks into his opponent's camp. [*Is. B.*]

42...♝a6

On 42...♖d7, White wins by 43.♞xc6. [*Is. B.*]

43.♞xd5!

The strongest move. The obvious-seeming 43.♞b7 ♞d8 44.♖b4 would be met by 44...♞d7. Then White would be forced either to withdraw his queen to h3 (45.♞c8† ♞d8 46.♞h3), forfeiting almost all his advantage as a result, or else to play 45.♞xb8†, giving up his queen for rook, bishop and pawn – a sacrifice that is not entirely clear. [*Is. B.*]

43...♞xf4

This is the attempt that was mentioned earlier. [*Ig. B.*]

Neither 43...♖xb6 44.♖xd6 nor 43...♗f8 44.♗b7 offered any chances. Black is attempting to confuse the issue. [*Is. B.*]

44.♗xa6 ♗e4† 45.f3 ♗e6

If 45...♗e8, then 46.♗b7 is adequate. [*Is. B.*]

46.♗c4

But now this is stronger than 46.♗b7, as after 46...♖f8 47.♖dc5 ♗xe3 Black would pick up the pawn on d4. [*Is. B.*]

46...♗xe3

The simplest way to meet 46...♖e8 would be 47.♖e5! ♕xe5 48.♗xe6 ♖xe6 49.♘xe5, and White wins the ending with no trouble. [*Is. B.*]

47.♘e5

Threatening 48.♖d8† with mate to follow. The curious thing is that all the play since resumption has followed one of the lines that I had happened to analyse “in the course of duty” during the adjournment. [*Ig. B.*]

47...♖f8

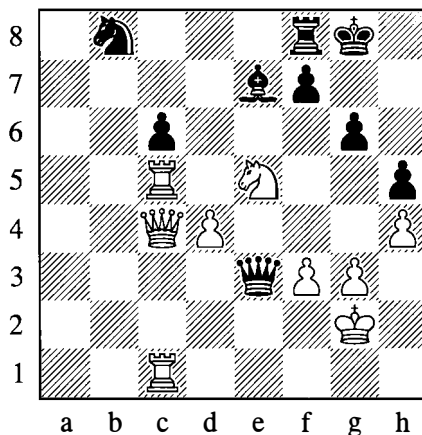
White could answer 47...♖c7 with either 48.♖c2, defending the second rank, or 48.♖c5 ♖a7 49.♖a1. [*Is. B.*]

48.♖c5!

This is much better than 48.♖d6 ♖g7 49.♘xc6 ♘xc6 50.♖xc6 ♕xd4, after which White would still face major technical difficulties. [*Is. B.*]

48...♕e7

If 48...♖g7, then 49.♖c2 and 50.♖e2. [*Is. B.*]



Black might seem to have achieved success. The rook can't withdraw to a5 in view of 49.♗d2†. But the initial impression is false, as should become clear after White's next move. [*Ig. B.*]

49.♖b1! ♕xc5

Despair. White wins after 49...♖g7 50.♖b7! ♗d2† 51.♖h3 ♗d1 52.♗c1, or 49...♕d6 50.♖b2 and 51.♖e2. [*Is. B.*]

50.♖xb8

This is the whole point! Now Black could still have “played on” a little after 50...♖h8, seeing that 51.♖xf8† ♕xf8 52.♗xf7 allows perpetual check. White would need to do some work, but of course 51.♘xf7† should lead to victory.

Black resigned, however. Petrosian had splendidly exploited his opponent's passive play. [*Ig. B.*]

1–0

Petrosian was philosophical about his defeat in the match. Having turned 40, which Botvinnik held to be a critical age from the viewpoint of the highest achievements, he didn't consider the loss of the World Championship title to be a tragedy, and he appraised the situation soberly. Life carried on. An answer that he gave in a mini-interview a year later, after the end of the “Match of the Century”, is revealing:

"What is chess to you – what is it that attracts you most in this game?"

"The unattainable ideal in chess is to play without mistakes. The aspiration to play faultlessly is just what attracts me in this game more than anything else. Possibly Grandmasters sometimes play without mistakes when at the height of their powers, but errors are inevitable at other stages of their careers.

"Every chessplayer in play against an opponent is struggling with himself at the same time. Every game or match is simultaneously an inward struggle. I have lost a good many crucial games through being unable, first and foremost, to conquer myself.

"Every Grandmaster is a fairly complex personality, and people's idea of him doesn't always correspond to reality. Tal is not only 'sacrifices', Fischer is not only an 'electronic machine'. Petrosian is identified with 'caution'. Some people think that during play I am too cautious. To me, it seems that in this case the matter can be put differently. I endeavour to avoid any chance occurrences. Those who rely on chance ought to play cards, or roulette. Chess is quite different.

"I never considered that I was bound to become World Champion. I didn't regard losing the title as a personal tragedy. Above all else I play chess, now just as before."

Petrosian decided to confirm his potential by taking part in the next USSR Championship, the thirty-seventh – a marathon event with 23 participants.

"Having suffered the severe shock of losing the World Championship title," Mark Taimanov writes, "he shortly afterwards resolved to undergo one more difficult examination by playing in the USSR Championship, where nobody, as we know, is insured against failure. Petrosian wanted to put everything he had into it, to answer his own question as to what he is now worth. This decision, courageous

and wise, also proved a happy one. The result of the tournament applied balm to the ex-Champion's 'wounds', and showed everyone two things: first, it was not an accident that he had been World Champion for six years, and secondly, he has kept up his strength to this day.

"All the way through the tournament, Petrosian was true to himself. He played calmly and confidently, he didn't go all out to win every game, but he didn't confine himself to purely arithmetical calculations either. I hope I am not giving away any great secret if I say that Petrosian drew up his schedule for the tournament with a view to a 'plus 8' score, and this testifies both to his ambitious designs and to his sober estimation of his powers. A characteristic game in this tournament, a game that was pure Petrosian, was his win against Savon."

GAME 90

Tigran Petrosian – Vladimir Savon

Moscow 1969

It was with great interest that I approached my encounter with Vladimir Savon. It's always interesting to play against a fresh opponent who has never faced you over the chessboard before. The charm of a first meeting lends the game an extra emotional colouring. Nor must it be forgotten that up until that day, Savon (together with Anatoly Lutikov) had been leading the tournament.

Another comrade in my place would have exclaimed, "Good lord! This young generation! I don't know a thing about them!" But for my part I *am* fairly familiar with this generation of players, and it was no secret to me that Savon had a limited opening repertoire and would very likely play the Grünfeld Defence. However strange it may seem, it emerged

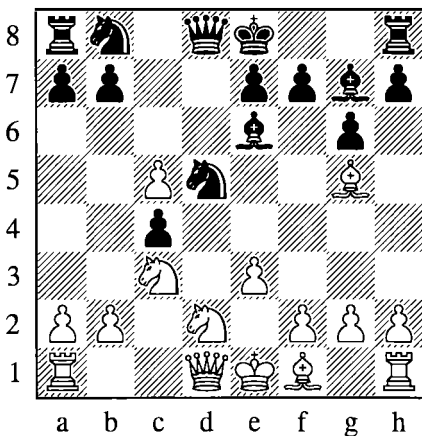
that no one had played 5.♔g5 against him. Although that move doesn't promise White any special blessings from the opening, it has served me truly and reliably for many a year.

The choice is made, then. Let us see how Savon will handle this scheme that he is little acquainted with:

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♖c3 d5 4.♖f3 ♔g7 5.♔g5 dxc4

Here was a surprise in return. My opponent spent about 15-20 minutes on this move which is not mentioned in the openings manuals. All of a sudden I felt myself to be the prey rather than the hunter. "Who knows? Could I have walked into a prepared system? The fact that my opponent pondered this move for quite some time might just be a smoke-screen hiding the true state of affairs." The variation 6.e4 c5 7.d5 b5 was quickly discarded, and true to my custom, I steered into what looked like a safe path.

6.e3 ♔e6 7.♖d2 c5 8.dxc5 ♖d5!



Matters are starting to take an unpleasant turn. In the Grünfeld and King's Indian Defences it quite often happens that the white queen's bishop, developed and then cut off from its birthplace by a pawn on e3, looks on helplessly as Black's bishop on g7 stirs up

trouble on the long diagonal. Urgent measures must be taken!

9.♔xc4 ♖xc3 10.bxc3 ♔xc4

White has distinct tactical chances, as demonstrated by the variation 11.♖xc4 ♔xc3† 12.♕e2 ♔xa1 13.♖d6† ♕f8 14.♖xa1. But after 12...♖c8 in this line, what is he to do?

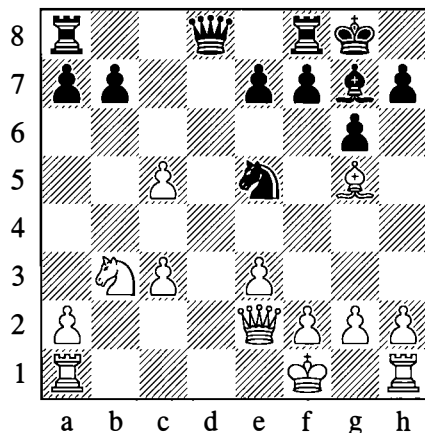
11.♖a4† ♖c6

The fact that the man from Kharkov prefers this move to 11...♖d7 suggests that if you ask whether he belongs to the scientific or the poetic clan of chessplayers, Savon should rather be placed among the latter. By developing the knight on d7, a sober chess intellect would be trying to win the c5-pawn back quickly and striving for long-term pressure.

12.♖xc4 0-0 13.♖b3 ♖e5 14.♖e2

After the game Taimanov championed the move 14.♖e4, but it has long been known that Mark Evgenievich is endowed by nature with much more chess optimism than the author of these lines...

14...♖d3† 15.♕f1 ♖e5



White has yet to get his scattered forces properly co-ordinated. To be fair it must be said that in spite of its calamitous appearance

his position is perfectly defensible, primarily because there are no obvious targets for the black pieces to attack.

16.e4

First of all bringing the bishop into play and also, to a considerable extent, eliminating the weakness on the light squares.

16...♘c6 17.♖c1

The pawn on c3 has to be preserved as a guard, so that neither the knight on c6 nor the bishop on g7 can view the d4-square as its property.

17...♔d7

Most likely 17...a5, seeking to force a2-a4, was stronger.

18.h4

Another useful move. Preparing to evacuate his king to g2 if appropriate, White forestalls an unpleasant check on h3. The rook's line of action will be lengthened after a possible h4-h5, with the promise of attacking chances – although at present these are very obscure. According to circumstances, the rook may also be brought into play via h3.

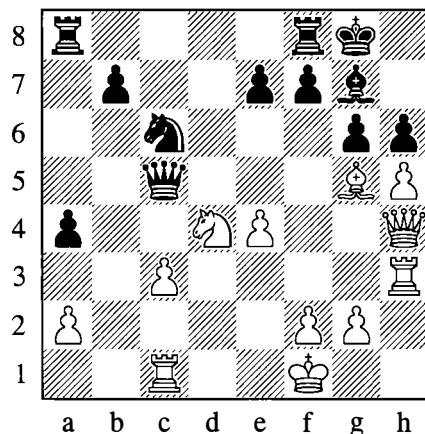
18...♗e6 19.h5 a5 20.♖h3 a4 21.♘d4!

White has already progressed so far with his development that he can calmly part with his extra pawn. Black's most reasonable course now was probably to play 21...♘xd4 22.cxd4 ♙xd4 23.♗d3 and then retreat his bishop, preserving hopes of a happy end to the struggle. From the practical standpoint this was Savon's best chance, especially as he didn't have all that much thinking time left.

21...♗e5 22.♗g4 ♗xc5 23.♗h4! h6??

And now time trouble takes its toll. Black had spent his last few minutes working out the variations after 23...f6 24.hxg6 hxg6 25.♗h7†.

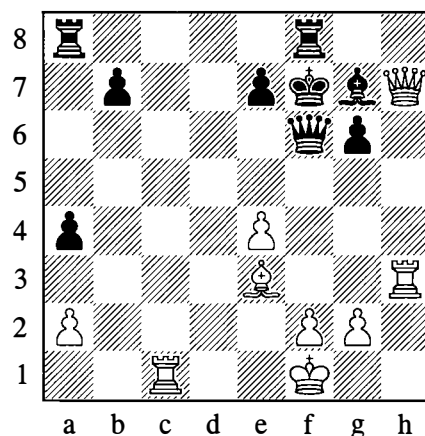
But he must have missed something, and as often happens in such cases, he confuses a real danger with an imaginary one.



24.♙xh6!

Perhaps Savon had overlooked that after 24...♙xh6 25.hxg6 ♗g5 26.♗xh6 the rook on c1 is defended?

24...♘xd4 25.cxd4 ♗xd4 26.hxg6 fxg6 27.♙e3 ♗f6 28.♗h7† ♔f7



29.e5

Of course not 29.♖f3 ♗xf3.

29...♗xe5 30.♖f3† ♔e6 31.♗xg6† ♙f6 32.♗g4† ♔f7 33.♖f5 ♗b2 34.♗h5† ♔e6

35.♖e1 ♘d7 36.♞d5† ♘c7 37.♞c1†

Black lost on time.

1–0

The final of the 37th Championship failed to produce an outright winner; the first two places were shared between Petrosian and Polugaevsky. The play-off match for the title of National Champion, which took place at the start of 1970 in the Central Chess Club of the USSR, brought victory to Tigran Petrosian.

“After congratulating you on your victory, Lev Polugaevsky said he thought it was well deserved and convincing – he spoke highly of your play. He also added that he was glad to have had the opportunity to play such a useful and instructive match. What do you yourself have to say about the match, about the key moments in the struggle, about your opponent?”

“You always feel like calling this kind of contest a short-distance sprint. In effect, the match doesn’t have its opening, its middlegame and its endgame – though no doubt you *can* point to the exceptional importance of game number one in psychological terms.

“After the successful conclusion to his match with Alexander Zaitsev last year, which made him Champion of the country, Polugaevsky complained quite a lot about the shortness of the distance, the difficulty of the psychological conditions. The attentive reader could well form the impression that such matches were not to Polugaevsky’s liking. And his match with me more or less confirmed what I just said; after losing the first game, my opponent couldn’t entirely regain his inner equanimity. That was my impression all the way through the match.”

GAME 91

Lev Polugaevsky – Tigran Petrosian

Moscow (1) 1970

Notes by I. Zaitsev

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♗f3 e6 3.g3 b6 4.♙g2 ♙b7 5.0–0
♙e7 6.b3

The credit for working out this modern system with the double fianchetto belongs to Botvinnik. This is just what brought him his famous victory against Larsen at Palma de Mallorca 1967. Polugaevsky too employs this opening set-up frequently and with success.

6...0–0 7.♙b2 d5

So the pawn columns of the two opponents have come into contact.

8.e3 c5

In Geller – Kholmov, Moscow 1969, Black refrained from the customary 8...c5 and continued with 8...♘bd7. There followed: 9.♗c3 ♗e4!? 10.cxd5! ♗xc3 (if 10...exd5, then if nothing else 11.♗d4 is unpleasant) 11.♙xc3 ♙xd5 12.♞e2 ♗f6 13.♞fd1 ♞c8 14.♞ac1 a5 15.d3 c5, with a positional advantage to White.

9.♗c3 ♘bd7

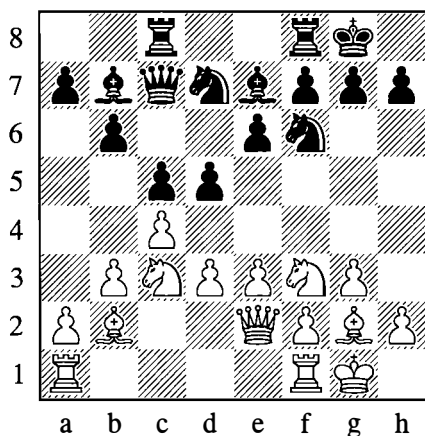
This way of developing the knight is coming to be accepted. In the event of an exchange on d5, Black aims to turn that square into a convenient station for his pieces. Previously, as a rule, 9...♗c6 was played here.

10.d3

On 10.♞e2, Black would have quite a good possibility in 10...♗e4 (the same motif as in Geller – Kholmov).

10...♖c8

Deploying his fighting forces to good effect. After (say) ...♖c7 and ...♗fd8, with his ideal pawn structure, Black will be completely ready for the game to open up.

11.♖c2 ♖c7**12.e4**

Seeing that any change in the central pawn structure (by means of d3-d4 or e3-e4) was basically up to White, it wasn't in his interest to hurry with this advance. Completing his development first, by centralizing his rooks, would have suited his purpose better.

12...d4 13.♘b1

It might have been worth opting for 13.♘d1, seeing that this knight could (after ♘d2 and f2-f4) come into play more quickly via f2.

13...♘e8

This is at any rate more precise than an immediate 13...e5, as it prevents any knight sortie to g5 or h4.

14.♘e1 e5

The formation that has arisen amounts to a King's Indian Defence with colours reversed. White, it is true, can attack his opponent's

centre by f2-f4, but Petrosian's counter-attack against the e4-point is more effective.

15.f4 g6!

As will soon become clear, this subtle move is an important link in Black's plan.

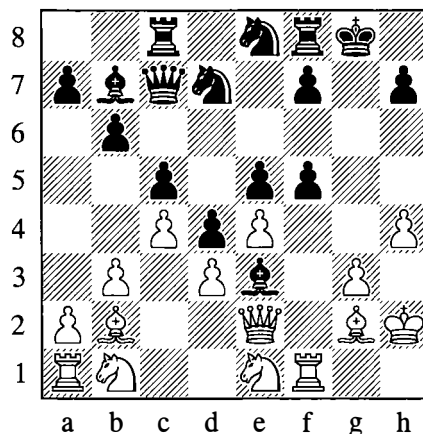
16.f5

It would be more circumspect to play 16.♘d2, or 16.♗h3 as recommended by Khasin.

Polugaevsky was evidently hoping to gain the initiative on the kingside, but Petrosian succeeds in breaking up the white pawn chain.

16...♗g5 17.h4

This outwardly active move is a serious mistake. The white king's position will soon become very shaky. Here again it would have paid to bring extra support to the e4-square by 17.♘d2. Another possibility was 17.♗h1 followed by ♘e1-f3-h4, maintaining the outpost on f5.

17...♗e3† 18.♗h2 gxf5!

From even a cursory comparison between the last two diagrams, the transformation is striking. Black is playing a middlegame while White still has problems of development to solve. The further course of the game

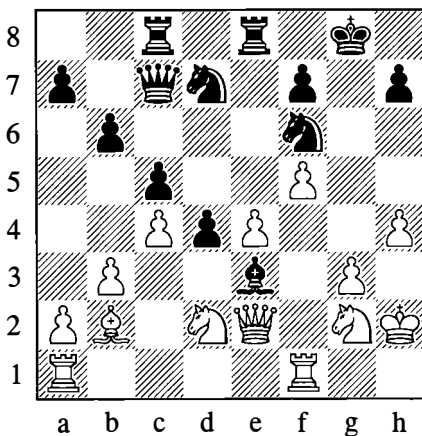
excellently illustrates the theme of “attacking the strong point”. In the present case, the point of engagement for the forces of both sides is the e4-square.

At this stage Polugaevsky sank into deep thought. How was he to continue? The variation 19.♖xf5 ♖g7 20.♖f1 (the exchange sacrifice 20.♙h3 ♖xf5 21.♙xf5 ♖f6 22.♖c3! ♖cd8 23.♖d5 ♙xd5 24.cxd5 is interesting but nonetheless inadequate) 20...f5 21.exf5 ♖xf5 22.♖xf5 ♖xf5 23.♖g4 ♖g7 24.♖a3 ♖f6 turns out clearly in Black's favour. Another line also demanded precise calculation: 19.♙h3 fxe4! 20.♖g4 ♖g7 21.♖xd7 ♖xd7 22.♙xd7 ♖cd8 23.♙h3 f5 24.♖a3 f4, and although Black has only two pawns for a piece, White is scarcely able to save himself. All the same, it seems to me that 19.♙h3 was the best practical chance.

19.exf5 e4 20.♙xe4 ♙xe4 21.dxe4

The intermediate check 21.♖g4 ♖ would merely add to White's difficulties after 21...♙h8 22.♖xe4 ♖ef6 and 23...♖g8.

21...♖ef6 22.♖g2 ♖fe8 23.♖d2



23...♙xd2

The simplest way. Black takes the game into a technically won ending.

24.♖xd2 ♖xg3 ♖! 25.♙xg3 ♖xe4 ♖ 26.♙f4 ♖xd2 27.♖fe1 ♖f6 28.♖xe8 ♖xe8 29.♖e1 ♖de4 30.♖e2 ♖f8

Not the premature 30...d3 31.♖e1 d2 32.♖g1, after which White has chances to muddy the waters.

31.♙f3

White was unable to consolidate his position, for after 31.♖e1 ♖h5 ♖ 32.♙f3 (or 32.♙g4 ♖ef6 ♖ 33.♙f3 ♖xe2 34.♙xe2 ♖g3 ♖ and 35...♖xf5) 32...♖hg3 he would lose another pawn.

31...d3!

Now this does force the win.

32.♖e3

Or 32.♖e1 d2 33.♖d1 ♖g4!, winning.

32...♖d8

Another way to win was 32...d2 33.♖d3 ♖g4! 34.♖d7 (or 34.♖e3 ♖xe3 35.♙xe3 d1=♖ 36.♖xd1 ♖c3 ♖ etc.) 34...♖h2 ♖! 35.♙f4 ♖f2 36.♖xd2 ♖e4 ♖, and White will lose his rook (Antoshin).

33.♖e1

He could have dragged out his resistance somewhat by 33.♙xf6 d2 34.♙e7 ♖g7 35.♙xd8 d1=♖ ♖ 36.♙xe4 ♖xd8.

33...d2 34.♖d1 ♖g4! 35.♖e3 ♖ef2 36.♙c3 ♖d3

White resigned. He cannot avoid great material losses.

0–1

Chapter 13

1970-1972

The following article, entitled “Facts and Reflections”, was written by Petrosian shortly after the famous “Match of the Century” that took place in 1970 in Belgrade.

Chessplayers have never had the problem of a close season, and yet every springtime – with the exception of years featuring a World Championship match – the pulse rate of international chess life has dwindled almost to zero; while in our own country, the passions are aroused by battles of local significance – the championships of cities, regions and republics, which naturally don’t get much of a press and don’t greatly excite the broad chess community. That may be why this year’s chess spring has appeared so stormy.

The contest in which players of one country – the USSR – pitted themselves against selected players from the rest of the world (in what form of sport other than chess would such a duel be of interest?), and which was christened “Match of the Century” by the general public, was at bottom, in my view, devoid of sporting significance. Rather it was a demonstration – a practical proclamation of the International Chess Federation’s motto, “We are one family.”

This unusual undertaking (coinciding with a “meteor shower” over Belgrade in the last days of March) was intended to play an important role in propagandizing chess. And even if we only judge by the attention accorded to the match in the foreign (or more precisely, western) press, which is generally very sparing of chess information, this aim was achieved. The graph of world-wide interest in our game took an up-turn.

Curiously enough, it was rather the losers who were satisfied with the result of the match. (It ended, as is well known, in a win for the Soviet team by the narrowest possible margin.) This was mainly because, in their games against the top four opponents, our players came out neither more nor less than five (!) points down. In a team event, a point, a half-point or even a zero is placed in the “kitty”; you might think that there were no “pay differentials”, that it would not matter who gained or lost a point on which board, and that the important thing was the overall final result. Nevertheless, it was the games on the top boards that received the focus of attention. These games were contested by the World Champion and the seven Grandmasters who are currently priced highest on the World Championship Candidates “stock market”; and they relegated all other sporting and creative aspects of the match to the background.

As one of those responsible for our “minus score”, I shall not try to explain it by the shortness of the distance – four games in all, on each board – which, considering the high class of the competitors, meant that if you were the first to suffer a defeat, your situation was essentially hopeless. Commentators on the football World Cup never tire of emphasizing the importance of the first goal in a game between equally matched teams at the top level. But what if the matches in

Mexico were not of an hour and a half's duration but were "speed games" lasting fifteen minutes? The recipe, at any rate, is simple: don't be the first to concede a score!

True to his custom, Fischer kept all those present on tenterhooks. Famous for his intractability, after sorely exercising people's nerves he took the decision (on the spur of the moment?) to concede top board to Larsen, which the Danish Grandmaster had been campaigning for with rare persistence up to the last minute – even though the "Rest of the World" team managers had had enough time before the match to sort out "who was who".

In short, this "pre-Candidates" week gave us one more cause to ponder the prospects for the World Championship struggle.

If no extraordinary events occur in the Interzonal Tournament, then in less than a year's time Larsen, Hort and Portisch will once more engage in duels with Soviet Grandmasters – who will be fighting not only for their own personal prestige. They will be trying to ensure that the tradition of holding the World Championship match in Moscow will not be broken in 1972.

"And what about Fischer?" the chess fans are asking. I have asked myself that same question. Meeting a strong opponent when you are fully armed and ready is not the same as when he descends on you out of the blue.

The American Grandmaster refused to take part in the last US Championship, which determined the country's representatives for the Interzonal. The small dimensions of the tournament – eleven rounds in all – were the reason he gave for his decision. He thereby placed himself outside the line-up of participants for the FIDE competitions of 1969-1972.

There would seem to be doubtful credibility in a report that one of the American players who have gained the right to play in the Interzonal Tournament – Reshevsky, Benko or Addison – is willing to concede or even sell (!) his place to Fischer.

If that happens, what is to become of the system of World Championship contests that is based on the sole valid principle of competitive selection and has been in operation for more than twenty years now?

During his entire period of tenure, the FIDE President, Folke Rogard, has sought to ensure scrupulous observance of the regulations in force, and has demanded the same from national federations. But this year President Rogard's current four-year term of office expires, and there are rumours that he aims to retire. So it is possible that the next FIDE Congress, which assembles in West Germany in September, will have to elect a new head of the Federation for the next four years. It is not superfluous to point out that the Interzonal Tournament begins only in November.

Let us recall the way in which new generations of Soviet players stepped forward into the spotlight of chess in our country, and then in world chess, in the post-war era. Usually, great talents would not emerge in isolation but in entire groups; and then over a certain stretch of time, as a "company", they would gain their place in the sun.

Smyslov, Boleslavsky and Bronstein had already drawn attention to themselves before the war, but I dare say they truly consolidated their chess status in the first post-war years. After 1949, the names of Averbakh, Geller, Taimanov and Petrosian became well known, and after another 5 or 6 years Spassky and Tal began to shine. And then... and then a lengthy period of chess drought set in.

GAME 92

Tigran Petrosian – Robert James Fischer

Belgrade 1970

It is extremely rare to see a game in print with annotations by the loser. Nor is this an accident. When a player analyses his own play after the end of a game, the conclusions that he draws are something he doesn't by any means always want to place in the public domain.

In my case it went very much against the grain to come back to my games with Fischer. This wasn't at all because I had suffered defeat on the score chart. Recalling how helpless I looked at the start of the match was not easy.

After losing the first game, it was a difficult task for me to work out a line of conduct for the following duel. Throwing myself at my opponent headlong would not be sensible, considering that it was quite a short match in which a second loss running would amount to a catastrophe.

Should I play for a draw? With White? That would be absurd. What sort of mood would my opponent be in? Warlike or peaceable?

"Let me consult someone knowledgeable," I decided. "What tactics does *he* think Fischer will adopt?"

"Bobby? He 'plays chess', always and with everybody," said an experienced tournament fighter.

"Very well then, in that case I'll have to 'go for it'. It seems my opponent will be out to consolidate his success, and I must try to take advantage of that fact if I can. What move should I open with? After 1.d4, it's sure to be a Grünfeld. It'll be better to play 1.c4. That move, by the way, will leave him a little 'in the dark'."

1.c4 g6

It seems I guessed right. Fischer leaves open the possibility of employing Grünfeld ideas, and maybe he even intends to go back to the King's Indian. He's sure to have noted that I haven't been doing all that well against it recently.

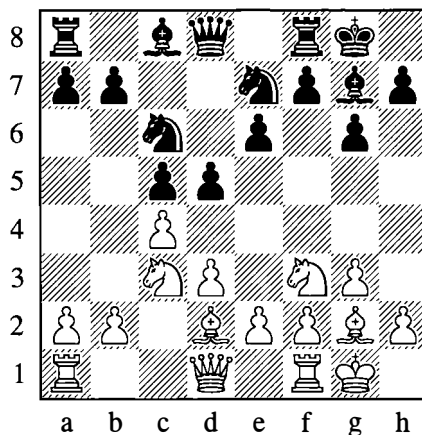
2.♘f3 c5

A simple solution! With this move order Black practically denies White the option of pushing his d-pawn. On 3.♘f3 ♗g7 4.d4, he plays 4...cxd4 5.♗xd4 ♘c6, and neither an exchange on c6, nor 6.♘c2, nor 6.e3 promises White anything good from the opening. I get the impression that Fischer was very well prepared to meet 1.c4.

If only I knew whether he had prepared it all in Belgrade, or earlier...

The experience from this game was to stand me in good stead shortly afterwards, at the tournament in Zagreb. In the last round I was playing White against the American Grandmaster again. After 1.c4 c5 I continued with 2.♘f3, and then I answered 2...g6 with 3.e4. The continuation 3...♗g7 4.d4 ♘c6 5.dxc5! ♞a5† 6.♗fd2! ♞xc5 7.♗b3 gave a position favourable to White.

3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 ♘c6 5.♘f3 e6 6.0-0 ♗ge7 7.d3 0-0 8.♗d2 d5



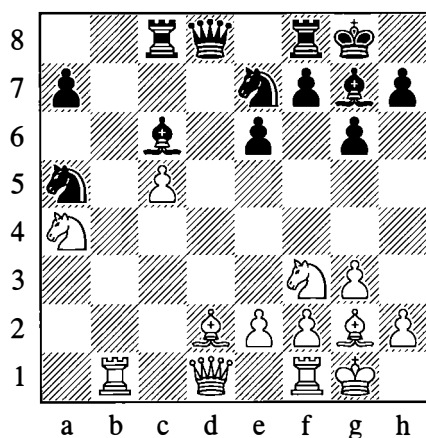
Black has opted for a scheme that you can hardly call anything other than fireproof. The sturdy pawn structure in the centre allows him to develop his forces in peace. The “enigmatic” character of his d-pawn plays an important role. The pawn may be pushed forward, or on the other hand (choosing a convenient moment) it may be exchanged on c4. The prospects for White in the centre are less clear. Neither an exchange on d5 nor an advance of his e-pawn promises him anything positive. Reluctantly, therefore, White has to resort to the unappetising plan of b2-b4.

9.a3 b6 10.♖b1 ♙b7 11.b4 cxb4 12.axb4 dxc4 13.dxc4 ♖c8

Black already has the pleasanter position. The pawn on c4 may become a burden for White, and it isn't so simple to find an antidote to Black's clear plan of centralization with ...♗d7 and ...♞fd8, coupled with a possible ...♟d4.

Of course, for the purpose of seeking equality, I could have decided on 14.♟b5 and answered 14...a6 by retreating the knight to a3, in preparation for exchanging the queenside pawns.

14.c5? bxc5 15.bxc5 ♟a5 16.♟a4 ♙c6!



When considering the position after move 13, I couldn't see any direct refutation of the

plan with 14.c5, though I did have misgivings about the entire venture. Black's sixteenth move was very strong, and so in particular is his seventeenth. It turns out that defending the c5-pawn is not easy.

17.♞c2 ♟b7!

Of course not 17...♙xa4 18.♗xa4 ♖xc5 19.♙b4, after which the rook could not be maintained on the 5th rank.

18.♞fc1 ♗d7 19.♟e1 ♟d5

Rejecting the variation 19...♙xa4 20.♖xb7 ♗xb7 21.♙xb7 ♙xc2 22.♙xc8 ♖xc8 23.♖xc2 ♟c6, with which Black would retain the better chances in spite of the major simplification. Fischer continues to improve his position.

20.♟b2 ♙b5 21.♟ed3

After 21.♟bd3 ♙d4 22.♗b3, it would become clear that winning the c-pawn was still not such a simple matter. But at bottom I had already washed my hands of it.

21...♙d4 22.♗b3 ♟xc5 23.♟xc5 ♖xc5 24.♖xc5 ♙xc5 25.♟d3 ♙xd3 26.♗xd3

Black has a healthy extra pawn, but exploiting it is far from simple. From a7 to a1 is a long way, and Black can scarcely hope to make positional gains in any other sector of the board. White has no weaknesses, and his bishop pair also counts for something.

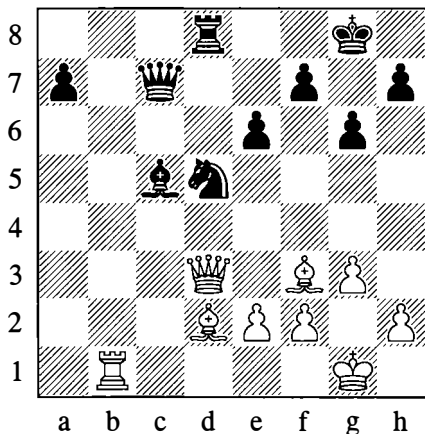
26...♞d8

Fischer clearly isn't keen on the prospect of an exchange on d5 in these conditions, so he fortifies his knight on that square. After the queen leaves d7, there will be tactical chances based on jumping away with the knight.

27.♙f3

It is difficult to object to this move. White has to stick to waiting tactics.

27...♔c7?



If White were to play 28.♖c1! now, he could breathe freely. His threat of ♖c1xc5 followed by e2-e4 could not be averted painlessly.

Look what I contrived to do instead:

28.♙g5? ♙e7 29.♙xe7 ♗xe7

Not only has White renounced his bishop pair. The bishop that has gone is the dark-squared one which was operating on both wings.

30.♗d4?

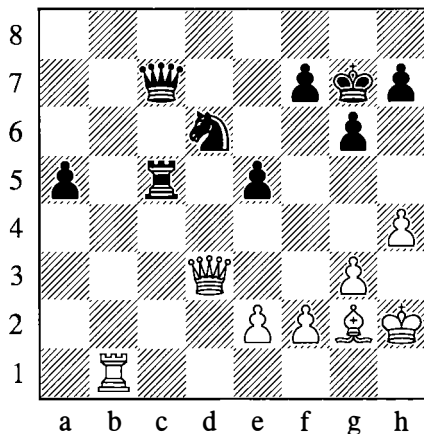
I feel like saying that any other move would have been better. Now Fischer gradually installs his pieces on the dark squares and will virtually be playing with a piece more, since finding employment for the white bishop is extremely difficult.

30...e5 31.♗c4 ♖b6 32.♗c2

Until Black's pieces have taken up their ideal positions, it is in the endgame that White should be seeking chances of salvation. He should therefore have offered a queen exchange with 32.♗b4. If Black declined to simplify, the queen on b4 would be well placed.

32...♖c8 33.♗d3 ♖c4 34.♙g2 ♗c7 35.♗a3

♖c3 36.♗a5 ♖c5 37.♗a3 a5 38.h4 ♖c4 39.♗d3 ♖d6 40.♙h2 ♙g7



In this situation the game was adjourned, and I had to seal a move. The knight on d6 is occupying an excellent post, and White must disturb it if he is to have the slightest possibility of active play. This was the reasoning behind the move I sealed, instead of which 41.♗a6 would have been better.

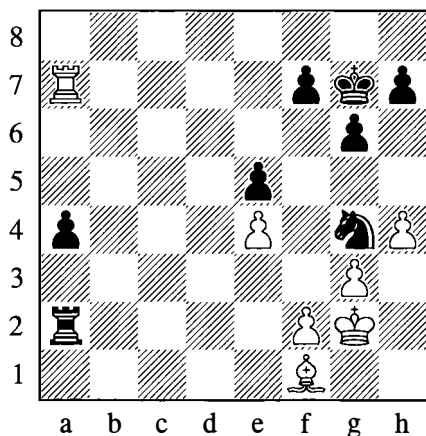
41.♖d1 ♖e8!

The knight heads for a square where White cannot get at it – f6. Moreover it emerges that a possible check on g4 will be highly unpleasant. The dreariness of White's position is emphasized by the following variation: 42.♗a6 ♖f6 43.♙a8 (the g2-square has to be freed for the king) 43...a4 44.♗xa4 ♖a5 45.♗c6 ♗a7, and Black wins. White therefore has to try to exchange queens, even though the endgame now looks completely lost.

42.♗d7 ♗xd7 43.♖xd7 ♖f6

This appears very strong, but Fischer hadn't by any means foreseen everything.

44.♖a7 ♖g4† 45.♙g1 ♖c1† 46.♙f1 ♖a1 47.e4 a4 48.♙g2 ♖a2



Black's last move looks like the concluding blow. The attack on the f2-pawn is added to all his other advantages. And yet White has a concealed defensive possibility. After 49.♔g1, the f2-pawn proves to be invulnerable. The rook cannot take it owing to 50.♙h3, while 49...♖xf2 is very strongly answered by 50.♙c4.

When analysing this position after the game (Fischer, by the way, had not seen 49.♔g1), we quickly looked through the variation 49...♖xf2 50.♙c4 ♖h3† 51.♔h1 ♖f2 52.♙e6! (White's whole idea is based on this), and were on the point of concluding that I could have saved myself – but then someone just as quickly took the variation further: 52...a3 53.♙xh3 a2 54.♔g1 ♖b2 55.♙f1 g5, and the forward march of the black king decides the issue as the white pieces are essentially stalemated. So the line was written off as hopeless for White in the pages of the chess press, thanks to the fact that a large number of chess journalists had been present at our post-mortem. However, it is fairly easy to see that instead of 54.♔g1? the correct defence is 54.♙g2 followed by 55.♔h2.

So the question whether Black could have won after 49.♔g1 remains open. For White this would have been a splendid practical chance. The most distressing thing is that I saw all the possibilities, just as I realized that the continuation in the actual game was hopeless.

49.♖xf7† ♕xf7 50.♙c4† ♕e7 51.♙xa2 a3

Black's path to victory is not complicated. The white king will inevitably be drawn towards the far advanced passed a-pawn. Meanwhile on the kingside, Black will gain a decisive superiority.

52.♕f3 ♖f6 53.♕e3 ♔d6 54.f4 ♖d7 55.♙b1 ♖c5 56.f5 ♖a6 57.g4 ♖b4 58.fxg6 hxg6 59.h5 gxh5 60.gxh5 ♕e6 61.♔d2 ♕f6 62.♔c3 a2 63.♙xa2 ♖xa2† 64.♔b2 ♖b4 65.♔c3 ♖c6 66.♔c4 ♖d4

White resigned.

0–1

GAME 93

Robert James Fischer – Tigran Petrosian

Belgrade 1970

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♖c3

This can count as a small moral success. Fischer doesn't repeat the variation from the first game. He rightly considers that this, the most natural move, is also the strongest.

3...g6

A continuation seen comparatively rarely, which, as practice shows, doesn't alter the character of the fight that is typical of this opening. Black obtains a somewhat passive but solid position.

4.e5

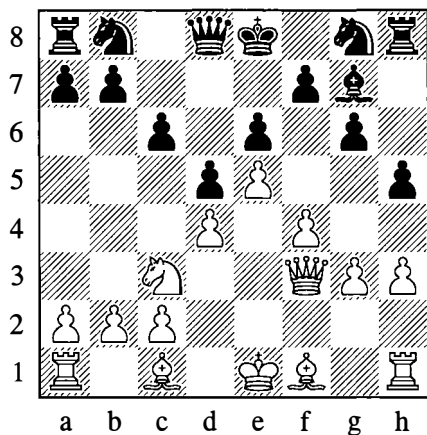
The move 4.h3, which the theorists proclaim as White's best method of development, may be called a typical case of "chess snobbery". The game continuation cramps Black, which is a weighty enough argument in its favour.

4...♙g7 5.f4

I feel that 5.♙d3 is better. Black now has a relatively easy game. He must try to exchange

off his light-squared bishop for his opponent's bishop or knight, and then arrange his pawn bastions on the light squares to enable his forces to be deployed.

5...h5 6.♖f3 ♗g4 7.h3 ♗xf3 8.♙xf3 e6 9.g3



Once and for all forestalling the pawn move to h4 which would be an important advance for Black – White's chances on the kingside would be drastically reduced. Black could hardly have pushed his rook's pawn last move, on account of 9.f5!, opening up the f-file.

9...♙b6 10.♙f2 ♖e7 11.♗d3 ♘d7 12.♖e2 0-0-0 13.c3

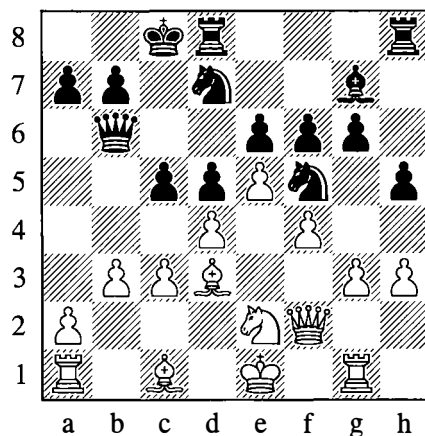
White aims to mobilize in the most convenient way possible, under cover of a pawn edifice that is no less solid than Black's; only then will he undertake active operations.

If White succeeds in carrying out g3-g4 in complete comfort, the dangers in store for Black will be obvious – he will have nothing with which to stop f4-f5. On the queenside also, an offensive beginning with the advance of the white c-pawn could prove fairly unpleasant.

Black needs to take urgent measures, and actually he does possess a certain basis for counterplay. White's king has lingered in the centre, and as is usual in such cases,

this disturbs the co-ordinated action of his pieces, especially the rooks. As for the white pawn chain, it must be attacked as quickly as possible, and the attack must come from two directions.

13...f6 14.b3 ♖f5 15.♗g1 c5

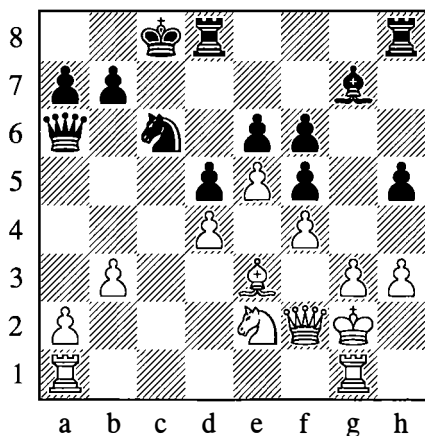


In this situation Fischer thought for a long time and decided, not without reason, to go over to passive defence. Too many active continuations for Black are in the air, involving exchanges on e5 or d4, or another pawn break with ...g6-g5. The appearance of a rook on f8 will underline the awkward position of the white queen.

16.♗xf5 gxf5 17.♗e3 ♙a6 18.♘f1 cxd4 19.cxd4 ♖b8?

The routine transfer of the knight to c6 is weak. Playing the bishop to f8 would offer more chances to keep up a complex struggle with favourable possibilities for Black. On the a3-f8 diagonal the bishop would be occupying a good position. The knight would be quite suitably placed on d7.

20.♗g2 ♖c6

**21. ♖c1!**

Bringing the knight to d3 not only relieves White of all worries, it also obliges Black to play with a certain amount of caution.

21... ♜d7 22. ♙d2 ♚a5 23. ♜xa5 ♘xa5

After the queen exchange, the fate of the remaining major pieces is settled by the fact that there is just one open file on the board. At this stage it is more or less obvious that the game must end in a draw.

**24. ♘d3 ♘c6 25. ♜ac1 ♜c7 26. ♜c3 b6
 27. ♜gc1 ♙b7 28. ♘b4 ♜hc8 29. ♜xc6 ♜xc6
 30. ♜xc6 ♜xc6 31. ♘xc6 ♙xc6 32. ♙f3**

Draw.

½–½

After his unsuccessful showing in the “Match of the Century”, Petrosian performed more cautiously in play for the Soviet team and in other contests of 1970. Thus in the European Team Championship at Kapfenberg, playing on top board, he won only one game and drew five.

At the 19th Olympiad in Siegen, the USSR squad was headed by Spassky. It might have been supposed that after their victory over the combined team of the rest of the world, the Soviet players could expect no competition from teams of lesser standing. And yet

astonishingly, in their final group they drew four matches and were put “in the shade” by the Hungarians whom they overtook just four rounds before the end of the tournament. At Siegen, in contrast to his superb performances on first board at previous Olympiads, Petrosian on board two made a more modest score (“plus six”); this was less than Spassky (“plus seven”), who had a win against Fischer to his name.

GAME 94

Arturo Pomar – Tigran Petrosian

Siegen (ol) 1970

The Spanish Grandmaster Arturo Pomar is one of those players who remain faithful to certain particular schemes of development throughout many a long year if not their entire lives. Accumulating wide experience in playing these schemes, Pomar will strive to take his opponents into middlegame positions he has thoroughly studied.

Over a very long period, an effective weapon in Pomar’s hands against the King’s Indian Defence was the Four Pawns Attack. At one time he also achieved quite good results by fianchettoing his king’s bishop in conjunction with the knight’s development to e2. Taking all this into account, I decided to play a system which outwardly resembles the King’s Indian but is characterized by delaying the development of the king’s knight; Black retains the option of bringing it out to e7 (which in fact he usually ends up doing), or to h6 (though there is nothing special for the knight to do on that square) – or else to f6.

1. d4 g6 2. c4 ♗g7 3. ♘c3 d6 4. ♘f3

I counted White’s last move as a distinct success on my part already. Pomar has been deprived of the chance to play the middlegame positions he has extensively studied. But as

we know, your appetite is whetted while you are playing. How about trying to lead my opponent right out into the wilds?

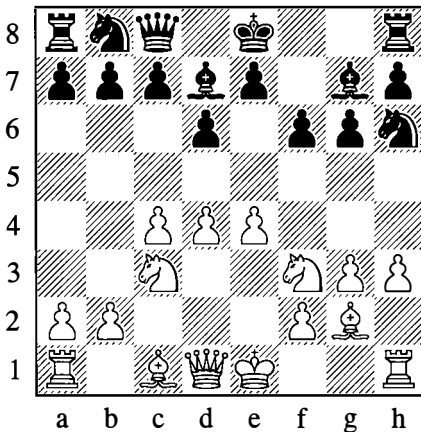
4...♟g4 5.g3 ♞c8

This kind of manoeuvre was fashionable in days of yore, but nowadays many if not all strong players view the idea with scepticism. I never in my life believed in the possibility of exchanging the bishop on g2 by these means, but I was seized with the urge to be original.

6.♟g2 ♜h6

Don't go and play 6...♟h3 if your opponent shows patent contempt for this threat! Of the knight's development on h6, something was said earlier.

7.h3 ♟d7 8.e4 f6



A mere 8 moves have been played, but already some conclusions can be drawn. Black stands badly. White has had no trouble seizing the centre with his pawns. He has developed his forces in the best way, and can proceed to active operations without any hindrance. The only problem for White is that his dominant position may induce a placid state of mind and arouse hopes that if he keeps on making obvious moves, he can wait until the ripe fruit falls at his feet of its own accord.

9.♟e3 ♜f7 10.♞d2

It was probably time to play d4-d5, which would aggravate the defects of Black's position still further.

10...c5 11.dxc5

Here too 11.d5 was a possibility. White is playing very logically. Possessing a lead in development, he tries to open up the game, counting on exploiting the superior mobilization of his forces.

From the point of view of standard chess principles, this all looks very sensible. However, the black formation contains no easily assailable points, while attention should be drawn to its resilience. In such cases, the way to success lies in the close co-ordination of strategy with tactics. Put more simply, a high degree of tactical acuity is needed. In the present game Pomar failed to display this quality.

11...dxc5 12.0-0-0 ♜c6

It looks more natural to castle, so as to bring at least one rook into the battle and remove the king to a safe place. But afterwards, playing ...♜c6 would not be simple. White's natural sortie with his knight to d5 (with tempo!) would gain in strength. Moreover by staying in the centre, the black king is covering both the pawn on e7 and the bishop on d7 for the present moment. The main problem that bothered me during the game was the possible capture of the c5-pawn. It is true that after moving the knight away from c6 Black would pick up the c4-pawn in return, but the whole question is which square the knight should move to.

In the case of 13.♟xc5 ♜a5, the continuation could be 14.b3 ♞xc5 15.♞xd7† ♜f8 with compensation for the pawn. But at the board I mainly examined 13.♟xc5 ♜ce5 14.♜xe5 ♜xe5 15.♞d4! (only thus; things would be a good deal easier for Black if the bishop

retreated) 15...b6 16.♙xe7! ♜xe7 17.♚d6†, and now 17...♜e8 18.♜d5, or 17...♜f7 18.f4 ♙f8 19.♚d4 (19.♚d2 ♙h6) 19...♙c5 20.♚d2 which clearly favours White. In this line after 16.♙xe7, the intermediate move 16...♜c6 fails to 17.♚xd7†, going into an ending where two pawns for the exchange in a good position would give White clearly the better chances.

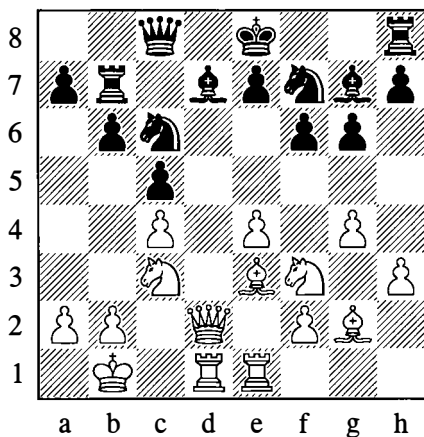
13.♜b1

Wasting time. Admittedly White is not short of it, so he doesn't set a particularly high value on it.

13...b6 14.g4 ♜b8 15.♚he1

White still keeps on preparing.

15...♜b7



Comparing the last two diagrams, we can see that Black has made significant progress in a relatively short space of time. White for his part has not succeeded in achieving anything tangible, and each of his last three moves leaves you perplexed to say the least. It is hard to fault them directly, yet this is not because they are good but because *any* move in the present situation, other than an outright error, would not be bad.

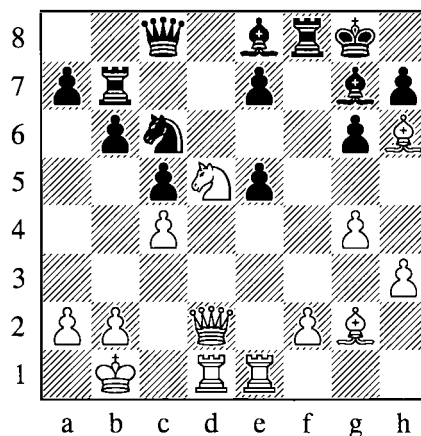
16.e5

White has remembered that there is no point in loading your gun if you don't intend to shoot with it.

16...fxe5 17.♜g5 0-0 18.♜d5?

I would have played 18.♙d5 e6 19.♜xf7 ♜xf7 20.♙e4 followed by an advance of the h-pawn, with ♜c3-b5-d6 also threatened.

18...♜xg5 19.♙xg5 ♙e8 20.♙h6



20...e6!

Black could probably have defended himself after 20...♙xh6 21.♚xh6 ♜xf2 22.♜f1 ♜f7, but the move he makes is the signal for the counter-attack.

21.♙xg7 ♜xg7 22.♜c3 ♜d4!

With one move, in effect, Black has firmly sealed off both the central files on which White stationed his major pieces with so much hope. It goes without saying that the restoration of the material balance can serve as no great consolation to White.

23.♜xe5 ♜gf7 24.♜e4?

It seems White has forgotten that his opponent can create serious threats. To be fair we should note that Black would still keep a positional edge after 24.♜f1 ♙c6.

24...♖c7!

The white rook has fallen into a trap, and this decides the outcome of the struggle.

25.♖g5 ♖f4 26.♗d3

There is no defence against the threatened ...h7-h6. White's following moves are typical time-trouble agony.

26...h6 27.♘d6 hxc5 28.♘xe8 ♖xe8
29.♗xc6† ♔f8 30.♗xg5 ♗h7†

White resigned.

0-1

* * *

After losing his World Championship title in 1969, Petrosian parted from his coach Isaak Efremovich Boleslavsky. Their collaboration lasting ten years at the highest level had taken a heavy toll on the distinguished analyst's powers. There was no longer the same motivation either; after passing the forty-year mark, it was unrealistic for the ex-World Champion to compete with the leaders of the young generation. After Spassky who was at the summit, Fischer was coming; Karpov's star was also on the rise. At the same time, though, Petrosian understood the social significance of his activity which had implications at national level, and he carried a great burden of responsibility to his numerous supporters (not only from Armenia); with his reputation to maintain, he could not allow the standard of his game to sink. But to continue playing at the top level, he needed an analyst as assistant. His choice fell on Igor Arkadievich Zaitsev, who by then had quite a few high-quality analytical works to his name.

But this event had a prelude, which was recounted by Zaitsev many years later in 2012, in his essay "Together with Petrosian" (posted on the authoritative chess website "Chesspro.ru"). We now reproduce some excerpts from the distinguished analyst's reminiscences. (Some

years after his work with Petrosian, Zaitsev also helped World Champion Anatoly Karpov during the latter's illustrious career; incidentally it was Petrosian himself who recommended Zaitsev to Karpov in 1975.)

In my capacity as Petrosian's coach and second, I had the pleasure of being present at many prestigious contests where chess history was made. But our first meeting was unforgettable.

Right at the start of the 1960s, when he was already one of the leading Grandmasters (and soon also to be the challenger for the chess crown), Petrosian willingly agreed to conduct sessions – unpaid, of course – with a group of young Moscow chessplayers. And among those fortunate people was the author of these lines.

These sessions took place on the Wednesday of each week. Petrosian never put on "professorial" airs, but each one of us, participating in joint analysis like "daubers" in front of an easel, felt that the hand of a great master was always close by, ready to correct the pupil's brushstroke at the required moment. Bringing the pieces to the key squares with short energetic sweeps of the hand, Petrosian gave the impression of directing a chess orchestra composed of everything on his side of the board. Probably for that reason, after making a move he would usually bow his head, as though listening to the purity of sound of the positional melodies.

During these sessions and in the years that followed, I repeatedly noticed that in his utterances on chess Petrosian would studiously avoid any excessively committal generalizations and far-reaching conclusions; as against that kind of theoretical philosopher's approach, he preferred the delicate observational method of the true connoisseur.

In his hands the pieces began to display astonishing qualities, violating the established hierarchy of the chessboard. Tal may have used violent combinative and sacrificial methods to

bring unimaginable chaos into the system of ranking of the pieces, and thereby procured the most prestigious attacking stations for one piece among several; but Petrosian, by purely positional means, would gradually conquer the necessary squares for *all* his pieces...

This period of training and the later years of creative association with the great player had an effect on my chess propensities: under Petrosian's influence and with his involvement, my interest in the game as a player was gradually transformed into an analytical interest. With time, serving my apprenticeship in his analytical "studio" (where such celebrities as Efim Petrovich Geller, Isaak Efremovich Boleslavsky, Semyon Abramovich Furman and Alexey Stepanovich Suetin had also laboured at various periods), I gradually began to join in the secrets of a new profession, exhausting but at the same time so captivating – the profession of chess analyst.

Years passed. And by way of putting my modest abilities to use, it pleased fate to make me one of Tigran Vartanovich's chess assistants, in the footsteps of Isaak Boleslavsky and Alexey Suetin. To me, a young International Master, this was of course extremely flattering. It goes without saying that before this event we had already begun a fruitful association which later blossomed into friendship.

Plenty of water had passed under the bridges since the time of our first acquaintance. This was naturally not the impulsive young Petrosian that I had known earlier. His six years on the chess Olympus had been more than enough to bring the first wrinkles to his face and the first shining grey hairs to his temples. Now, alas, he had been added to the club of thriving ex-World Champions which already included Euwe, Botvinnik, Smyslov and Tal. As before, he remained highly mobile and active, and disposed to lively, emotional communication; but there were also moments when he sought to be alone. Now and again

I would come across him deep in meditation; few people realize that even "iron Tigran", as he was sometimes called, needed comforting.

It seems to me that everything in Tigran Petrosian's life was connected with chess in one way or another. Nor is there anything surprising in this; you only need to glance at the biography of any of the World Champions to satisfy yourself that this is the rule rather than the exception. Petrosian very well understood how avidly his performances were followed by his many supporters, especially Armenians. Imagining how they rejoiced at each of his successes and endured his failures, he felt a great weight of responsibility on his shoulders. "I envy Misha," he once went so far as to admit to me in a moment of candour. (He was referring to Mikhail Tal.) "*He* is a free artist and can play how he likes." By contrast, Petrosian himself, though possessing outstanding combinative talent – as testified by many superb wins that he achieved in attacking style – was sometimes forced to tread the path of creative self-restraint for the sake of achieving stable competitive results.

No wonder, then, that Petrosian played in the Candidates cycles until the end of his chess career. But if he still harboured some illusions in the first of them, he later merely worried about maintaining his high rating – and playing with the world elite enabled him to count on doing so.

In 1971, in his first Candidates cycle after losing the World Championship title, Petrosian went all the way to the final. His first opponent was the 23-year-old Robert Huebner, and their match was held in Seville. The first six games ended in draws. It was all the more surprising that Huebner should decline to continue the match after suffering only his first loss, in game seven. Surprising to everyone, with the exception of Spassky; an analogous situation

had come about in *his* match with Petrosian in 1966 (after 6 draws, the 7th game was won by Petrosian).

Trying to understand the motives for Huebner's decision, Spassky observed: "Tigran Vartanovich's unique quality is his ability to keep his opponent at a distance that suits himself. In earlier days he managed it more easily, but even now he has retained this valuable quality to a significant extent. Incidentally Petrosian is, to use Botvinnik's apt expression, a 'left-hander'. Sometimes it seems that a game with Petrosian is proceeding peacefully, calmly; but... there is an unexpected jump, and you realize you are in a bad way. To many people this style is not readily comprehensible, they cannot greatly warm to it. But in it, the ex-World Champion's exceedingly original and interesting chess make-up is revealed."

Petrosian himself experienced no special emotions:

"Even though six games had been drawn, I had no doubt that the match would end in my favour. The point is that during the fifth game Huebner was already showing signs of nerves. He must have thought that I was going to strive for victory in all the games. So this time he was patently playing for a draw with the white pieces.

"It was only during game six that Huebner started complaining about noise. One of the news agencies reported afterwards that the noise had been an advantage to Petrosian, who (it was said) could switch his hearing aid off. To check the story, I turned to Suetin and Zaitsev. They told me there had *not* been any noise.

"In the seventh game there was a moment when Huebner could have gone into a superior ending. To sound out his intentions, I offered a draw. He declined it, but chose a different continuation. Shortly afterwards Huebner was the one who opened peace negotiations, but now *I* declined, even though my opponent

could bring about a draw by force. Once again he chose a different path, which eventually led him to defeat. The result was registered in a calm and restrained manner, but a few minutes later Huebner pulled his scoresheet out of his pocket, tore it up, and made off.

"All the same, there was nothing to lead us to expect what happened afterwards. I met Huebner in the evening; he was playing table tennis as usual. But the very next morning Harry Golombek, the chief arbiter, telephoned Suetin to say that Huebner was resigning the match. A while later we received news of his departure. I cannot say I was happy with this, as I had already made up my mind to take advantage of the match situation and increase my lead. To me personally, the victory I had gained was not very convincing.

"In conversation with the match organizers later, I was surprised to learn that ever since the day of his arrival in Seville, Huebner had almost always been dissatisfied with something or other. Once when playing table tennis he had fallen down in a faint, and the organizers were constantly expecting some incident. For my own part I just noticed to my surprise how my opponent was sometimes strangely distracted from the game, how he would look all around him, and so on."

A month later in Moscow, the Candidates quarter-final match between Petrosian and Korchnoi took place. To the general astonishment, this match between the Soviet Champions of the previous two years followed the same scenario as Petrosian – Huebner: a solitary decisive game determined the fate of the duel. It was just that this happened in the ninth game rather than the seventh. In order to understand all that happened in that game which settled the outcome of the difficult contest, something needs to be said about the overall tactics of the two opponents.

Grandmaster Kotov asserts:

"Petrosian is a player with a highly distinctive

style that took shape a long time ago and is difficult to define in one or a few words. One thing is clear: he doesn't go all out to attack, he doesn't strain to create sharp positions. In any position, even of the least investigated and most unfamiliar type, some kind of innate flair enables him to decide which piece should be placed where, what should be exchanged off and what should be retained. His formations are always full of harmony; most often they are designed to solve the problems of defence, but at any moment this 'defensiveness' can turn into a dangerous counter-attack. And *then* Petrosian will handle any position, even the sharpest and most complicated, with tremendous art and skill.

"His opponent is also considered to be a player with a defending and counter-attacking bent, but there is a great difference between him and Petrosian. Korchnoi never misses an opportunity to provoke a storm, to stir up complications; he is always ready to throw himself into an imaginative and energetic attack.

"And now in this crucial match the opponents played 8 draws, most of them virtually without a fight. But if Petrosian remained true to his style, Korchnoi was evidently *not* playing his own game. And chess did not forgive this..."

GAME 95

Robert Huebner – Tigran Petrosian

Seville (7) 1971

Notes by I. Zaitsev and M. Tal

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♘c3 e6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♘f6 6.♙e3

In the 3rd match game, Huebner had adopted the Sozin Variation. It brought him no advantage. [M.T.]

6...♙e7 7.f4 ♘c6 8.♙f3

White's plan involves queenside castling with a subsequent pawn storm on the kingside. In particular, that was the plan with which I succeeded in winning the 10th game of my match with Larsen in 1965. Petrosian's reply is considered by contemporary theory to be the strongest. [M.T.]

8...e5

It is precisely because of this counter-stroke in the centre that White's chosen set-up has lost quite a few of its adherents in recent years. [I.Z.]

9.♘xc6

Evidently 9.fxe5 was slightly more accurate; then if 9...♘xe5, White has 10.♙b5†. [I.Z.]

9...bxc6 10.fxe5 dxe5

After 10...♘g4 11.exd6 ♙xd6 (or 11...♙xd6), the game enters a phase of tactical complications. The following variation is notable: 11...♙xd6 12.♙f4 ♘e5 13.♙g3 ♙f6 14.♙c4 ♙e7 15.♙xe5 ♙h4 16.♙xf7† ♘f8 17.0–0, with involved play. [I.Z.]

11.♙c4 0–0 12.h3

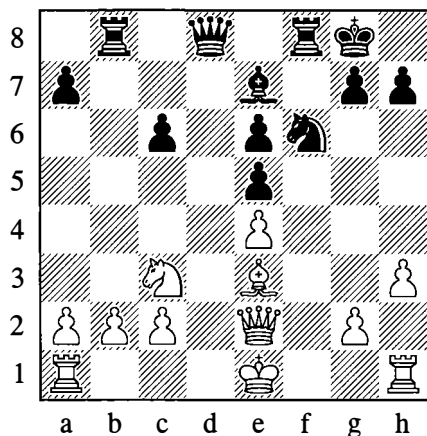
As is well known, Black can answer 12.0–0 with 12...♘g4 13.♙ad1 ♘xe3! 14.♙xf7† (if 14.♙xd8, then 14...♙xd8 with more than enough for the queen) 14...♘h8 15.♙xe3 ♙b6, and despite being a pawn down, he has excellent chances in the ending. [M.T.]

12...♙e6 13.♙xe6

The theoretical recipe – 13.♙b3 c5 14.♙xe6 fxe6 15.♙e2 c4 16.♙xc4 ♘h5 – gives Black a serious initiative for the pawn. [I.Z.]

13...fxe6 14.♙e2 ♙b8

Perhaps the piece sacrifice 14...♘d5!? 15.exd5 ♙h4† 16.♘d1 cxd5 deserved more consideration than you would think at first sight. [M.T.]



15.0-0

The pawn deficiencies in Black's formation are adequate compensation for White's minimal material deficit. A good response to 15.♖b1 is 15...♗b4 16.♕d3 (not 16.a3? ♕xe4!) 16...♗d4 17.♙xd4 exd4 18.♕e2 ♙b4†. After 19.♕d1 Black has a strong initiative for the exchange (a mistake would be 19.c3 dxc3 20.♗xd8 c2† 21.♙f2 ♕xe4† 22.♙e3 ♙c5†, and Black should win). The impression is that Huebner had carefully prepared the whole opening variation. [I.Z.]

15...♗xb2

It was also worth considering 15...♗b4. Then if 16.a3, Black plays 16...♗xb2; and in contrast to the game continuation, the pawn on a3 is under fire from the bishop. But here too, after 17.♕a4 ♗b7 18.♗c4, White has nothing to complain about. [I.Z.]

16.♗ab1 ♗b4

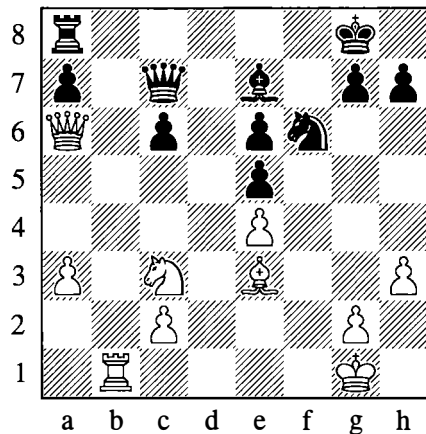
If the white queen once reaches c4, Black will have to go over to defence. Petrosian forestalls this for the moment, seeing that 17.♗xb4 ♙xb4 18.♗c4 ♗a5 promises White nothing. [I.Z.]

17.♗a6 ♗c7 18.a3 ♗xb1

There is no particular point in 18...♗bb8, as after 19.♗c4 the pawn on a3 is invulnerable:

19...♙xa3 20.♕b5 ♗a5 21.♕xa3 ♗xa3 22.♙c5. [I.Z.]

19.♗xb1 ♗a8



Here White declined Black's offer of a draw. Obviously the ending after 19...♗b8 20.♗xb8† ♗xb8 21.♗xc6 could hardly have been to Black's liking. Petrosian is not afraid of the white rook invading on the 7th rank; after 20.♗b7 ♗c8 White would be in an awkward pin. There seems to be more danger to Black in the plan Huebner selects. [M.T.]

20.a4 h6 21.a5

As Petrosian said after the game, he didn't at all like the ending that arises after 21.♗b7 ♗xb7 22.♗xb7 ♙d8 23.♗xa7 (not 23.♙xa7? ♗xa7) 23...♗xa7 24.♙xa7 ♙a5 25.♕d1! ♕xe4 26.♕e3; despite Black's extra pawn, the chances are only on White's side. Huebner neglects this favourable opportunity. [I.Z.]

21...♙h7! 22.♗b7

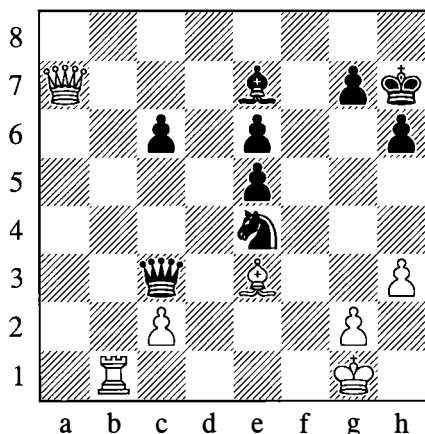
In this situation an exchange of queens would unquestionably benefit White, as his a-pawn (after the capture on a7) would become very menacing – for example, 22...♗xb7 23.♗xb7 ♙d8 24.a6 ♙a5 25.♕a4 ♕xe4 26.♗xa7. However, with his last two moves Petrosian has

prepared an exchange sacrifice that abruptly alters the character of the struggle. [M.T.]

22...♖xa5! 23.♖xa8 ♖xc3

Curiously, in the 1966 match with Spassky, the situation had in many ways been similar. There too the first six games were drawn, but in the seventh, with the black pieces, Petrosian managed to wrest the initiative from his opponent with the aid of an exchange sacrifice, and achieved a convincing victory. [M.T.]

24.♖xa7 ♜xe4



At this point it was White who reopened peace negotiations, but since Black was not risking anything, he decided to continue the fight. [I.Z.]

25.♞f1

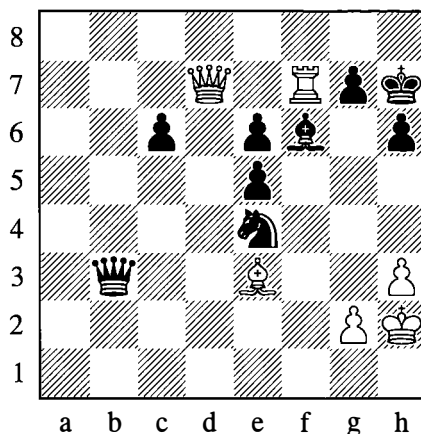
Signs of confusion. The simplest way to draw was 25.♖xe7 ♖xe3† 26.♞h1! (not 26.♞h2? ♖g3† 27.♞h1 ♜d2!). Although Black's position then looks very impressive, a draw would be the likely result. [I.Z.]

25...♞h4

Afterwards Petrosian came to the conclusion that a more energetic line was 25...♜g3 26.♞f7 ♖e1† 27.♞h2 ♜f5 28.♞f2 ♖d2. Then either

29.g4 ♞g6 or 29.♞g3 ♖d6 30.♖a1 ♜xg3 31.♞xg3 ♞g6 would set White some very difficult problems. [I.Z.]

26.♞f7 ♞f6 27.♞h2 ♖xc2 28.♖d7 ♖b3



29.♞f2

Again the German Grandmaster misses the strongest continuation, which is 29.♞f8. Then after 29...♖xe3 30.♖e8 g5 (checks with the queen don't alter anything) 31.♖f7† ♞g7 32.♖g8† ♞g6 33.♖f7†, the game concludes peacefully. White's tasks would be rather more complicated in the event of 29...♞h4, but here too, after 30.♖f7! ♞g3† 31.♞h1 ♜f6 32.♖a7! ♖b1† 33.♞g1 ♖g6 – a line indicated by Tal – Huebner could have reached a position where Black appears to have nothing substantial. [I.Z.]

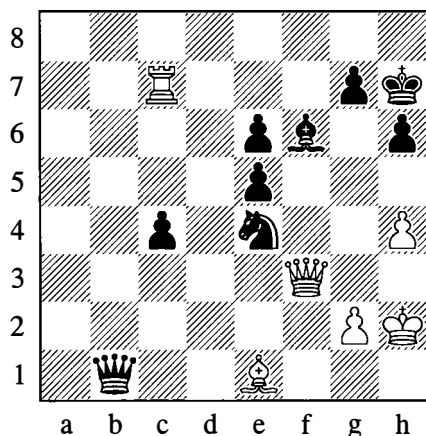
29...♖d5 30.♖a7 ♖d2 31.♖e3 ♖c2

The foregoing tactical play has cost both opponents a great deal of energy and (even more importantly) time. A time scramble is approaching. Here 31...♖d4 32.♞g1 c5 was somewhat more accurate. [I.Z.]

32.♞e1 c5 33.h4 c4 34.♞c7 ♖d3 35.♖f3

An inaccuracy in return. With 35.♖h3! ♖d5 36.♖g4 White could have maintained the balance. [I.Z.]

35...♖b1



With the help of a small combination “*a la Capablanca*”, Petrosian makes new positional gains. White cannot now play 36.♖xc4 ♖d6 37.♖c7 ♖xe1 38.♖xf6 ♖e8 39.♖xe6 ♖xh4† 40.♖g1 ♖xc7 41.♖f5† ♖g8 42.♖c8† ♖f7 43.♖xc7† ♖e7, with a won queen endgame for Black. [M.T.]

36.♖e3 ♖d6 37.♖d2 ♖f5

Black could have won by 37...e4!, but by this time the flags of both opponents were almost horizontal. [I.Z.]

38.♖xc4 e4 39.♖c2

An irreparable blunder; even now 39.♖e2 or 39.♖b4 would have given White realistic chances of a draw. [I.Z.]

39...♖xe1 40.♖xe4 ♖e5†

White resigned. This check, which, as Petrosian acutely observed, was the first to be given to Huebner’s king during all the seven games, turned out to be the last move of the match. [I.Z.]

0–1

GAME 96

Tigran Petrosian – Viktor Korchnoi

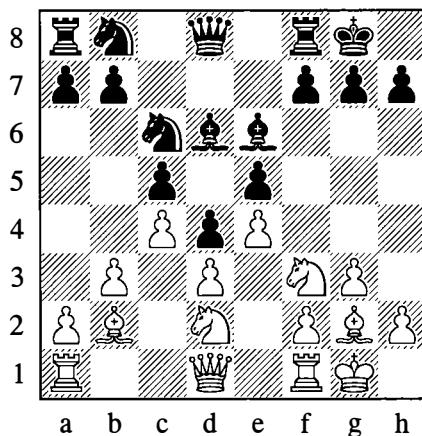
Moscow (9) 1971

Notes by A. Kotov

1.c4 e5 2.g3 c6 3.b3 d5 4.♖b2 d4 5.♖f3
♖d6 6.d3 c5 7.♖g2 ♖e7

What can be said about this opening? Petrosian has played it with both colours. What is most certain is that these are the ex-World Champion’s tactics: it’s as if he is calling to his opponent, “Come on, come on – attack me!”

8.0–0 ♖ec6 9.e3 0–0 10.♖bd2 ♖e6 11.e4

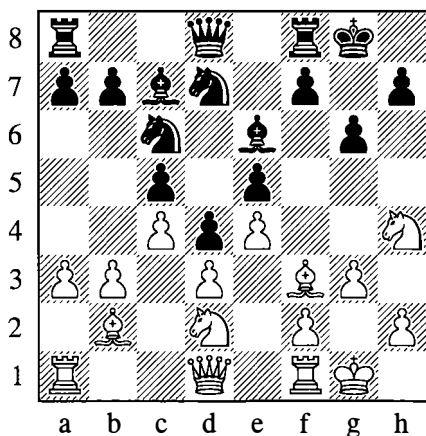


Why didn’t Petrosian play 9.e4 at once? Why did he “split” this advance into two parts? I have formed the firm conviction that he rejected the immediate e2–e4 because he was afraid Black might capture *en passant*. And in any case at move 10, with the white knight on d2, that capture would have had some point: 10...dxe3 11.fxe3 f5 would have given Black quite good chances in the fight for the central squares. Now the centre is closed, and a slow type of game ensues.

11...♖d7 12.♖h4 g6 13.♗f3 ♗c7

From this moment on, it's curious to follow how Korchnoi makes several completely redundant moves, one after the other, with inexplicable persistence. On c7 the bishop has nothing whatsoever to do. The position simply demanded the moves ...♗e7 and ...♗ae8, in preparation for ...f7-f5.

14.a3



14...♗a5

Again, a move that is not only unnecessary but even very harmful. What is there for the bishop on a5 to do? Go to c3? That would be silly. Pin the knight on d2 if the white rook moves to e1? The pin isn't all that terrible. Prevent the b3-b4 advance? You don't need outstanding tactical abilities to realize that the bishop on a5 is merely *facilitating* that advance, as it gives White the possibility of following up b3-b4 with an immediate ♖b3 – as was of course to happen in the game.

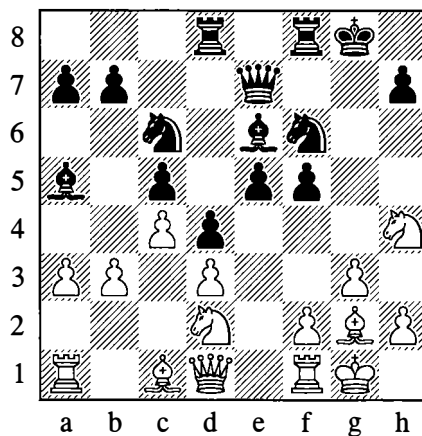
After his loss of tempo, Black should still have played 14...♗e7.

15.♗c1 ♗e7 16.♗g4

The same thing again: "Come on, come and get me!"

16...f5 17.exf5 gxf5 18.♗f3 ♖f6 19.♗g2 ♗ad8

If Korchnoi's earlier mistakes worsened the black position, this move comes close to ruining it. Why the rook was needed on d8 was something we couldn't understand when examining the game in the match press centre. The obvious-looking 19...♗ae8 would still have left Black with an excellent position.



20.♗a2!

A superb move that is pure Petrosian. With his chess "sixth sense", the ex-World Champion decides that from this square the rook will be brought across to the most important area of the battle at the necessary moment. This was indeed to happen.

20...♗c8 21.♗e1 ♖h8

Apart from being unnecessary, this move amounts to a simple oversight – given that a Grandmaster is supposed to anticipate such operations as the one Petrosian now carries out. Here again, logic demanded 21...♗de8.

22.b4!

After a long time lurking in ambush, the tiger pounces and begins tearing its victim to pieces.

22...cxb4

Wouldn't it have been better to withdraw the bishop to c7 at once? At any rate, it would not

then have been so simple for White to reach a won position – as he does in no time, once Black has taken the b-pawn.

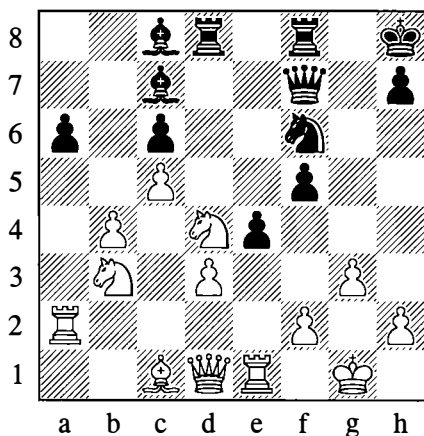
23. ♖b3 ♙b6 24. ♙xc6! bxc6 25. axb4

It is quite easy to understand that Black's position is now extremely difficult. You can therefore only marvel at how easy it has been for Korchnoi to spoil his game within a few moves, after it had been shaping up so well for him. Some thoughts immediately occur to you: during that series of colourless draws to which he had assented in the majority of games in the match, had Korchnoi forgotten how to fight a complex battle? You would think he obviously had, if you consider that in the tenth game, which produced another complicated position, Korchnoi again played with very little confidence indeed.

25...a6

If Black had played 25...♙g8 here, White's win would have been achieved by the same method of massed attack against the e5-pawn – with 26. ♖f3 or 26. ♙f4.

26. ♖f3 e4 27. c5 ♙c7 28. ♖fxd4 ♖f7



29. ♙d2!

Here is what White has long envisaged in his plans – the decisive concentration of all

his forces in the crucial area! Now ♖xc6 is threatened.

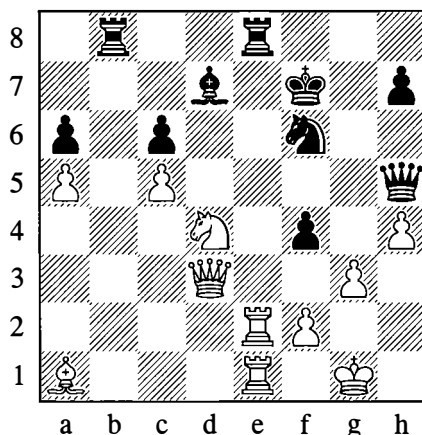
29...♙d7 30. ♙b2

And now the snag of Black's ...♖h8 is underlined.

30...♖g8 31. ♖a5 ♙xa5 32. bxa5 ♖b8 33. ♙a1 ♖fe8 34. ♖de2 ♖h5 35. ♖d2!

A move with many threats: the queen aims to jump out to f4 if appropriate, but is also prepared to limit itself to “modest” mating threats by occupying the c3-square.

35...♖f7 36. h4 exd3 37. ♖xd3 f4



38. ♖f3!

An excellent move, played in spite of time trouble. Right now the bishop on d7 is under attack (after 39. ♙xf6); but then White has about a dozen other threats too.

38...♙xe2 39. ♖xe2 ♖xc5 40. ♖e5† ♖f8 41. ♖xd7† ♖xd7

Now Petrosian was going to seal 42. ♖e6 with unavoidable mate, but Korchnoi anticipated this by resigning the game.

Tigran Petrosian's skill in “playing without the ball” (to use a football term) was displayed in this game with great brilliance. Once again he demonstrated his ability to prepare and

execute a counter-attack employing the full range of weaponry in his tactical chess arsenal.
1-0

* * *

The Candidates final match between Petrosian and Fischer took place in the autumn of 1971 in Buenos Aires. From Petrosian's viewpoint, the psychological background to the match was inauspicious. It wasn't easy for him to forget their duel in the "Match of the Century" the previous year, which Petrosian had lost by 1 point to 3. In addition the chess world had been shaken by the punishment that Fischer had meted out to his two previous opponents, Taimanov and Larsen, beating them with a clean 6:0 score. However, although the opinion of the majority of specialists was inclined to favour Fischer, there were also some optimistic prognoses. "Logic suggests that Fischer should win, but this is not conclusive," said Najdorf. "The match will be a contest of equals," Larsen predicted. One thing was beyond doubt: support for Petrosian from Argentina's huge Armenian community was guaranteed. However that might be, for Petrosian the match with Fischer was one of the key events in his chess career, and it deserves to be recounted in full.

Here is how Viktor Baturinsky recorded his impressions in his "Argentine Diary":

So the die is cast. Buenos Aires, the capital of far-off Argentina, is chosen as the place for the final Candidates match. The exchange of telegrams and telephone conversations between Moscow, New York, the Hague (FIDE headquarters) and Vancouver (the FIDE Congress) lasted several days but has now concluded – not, I dare say, to our own advantage. Now, following Taimanov and Larsen, it is Tigran Petrosian's turn to cross the ocean and face Robert Fischer.

On a murky autumn morning, the fairly small chess delegation set off on the long journey by air from Moscow via Paris, Nice and Dakar to Buenos Aires. No more and no less than 14,000 kilometres.

An unforeseen landing in Montevideo; Buenos Aires airport is temporarily closed. A few tedious hours of waiting, another thirty minutes of flying, and we are at our destination. The airliner taxis to the imposing airport building, and already from the windows we can see people on the flat roof, and large banners welcoming the ex-Champion of the world in Spanish, Russian and Armenian. By the landing stairs, ahead of everyone else, there is Miguel Najdorf of course, full of *joie de vivre* as always, expansive, clamorous. Crowds of correspondents, cameramen, photographers, live television coverage. The first handshakes, the first interviews. A cordial meeting with Soviet embassy personnel. There is Jorge Sanguinetti, General Secretary of the Argentine Chess Federation, affable, congenial; he has done a lot for the organization of the match. Finally we set off for the city.

Relations with the Soviet chessplayers are everywhere welcoming and friendly. Chess is very popular in Argentina. You could tell this by the interest shown in the match, by the thousands of attentive spectators for every game, and by the abundance of chess books in the shops. Among them were collections of games by Botvinnik, Keres, Petrosian, Tal and Bronstein, as well as translations of works by Soviet theorists – Sokolsky, Boleslavsky and others.

September 28th – a press conference in the building of the Ministry of Social Security. In the hall there are about 200 correspondents, as well as Grandmasters – Soviet, American (Robert Byrne, Kashdan) and Argentinian. Questions are answered only by Petrosian and Fischer. The American sits there with the bored expression of a man wasting his time. It seems

that even here he is continuing to ponder some variations or other. "Bobby," the question rings out, "is it true that you cry after losing a game?" Bobby gives an angry wave of the hand.

"Oh come on, Bobby," people insist. "Everyone *knows* you've cried."

"Well if *I* cry," Fischer replies, "the Russians are *ill* after they lose."

I have a feeling that this curious skirmish had some influence on Petrosian's decision not to take a time-out after the sixth game. But then that is only my conjecture.

September 29th – the formal opening of the match. That day there was a general strike in Argentina. Perhaps for that reason there were not many spectators in the hall, 200-300 in total. The opening was scheduled for 8 in the evening. Fischer is late. Taking advantage of the pause, the "paparazzi" gather round Petrosian. "Don't you think, Grandmaster, that Fischer's lateness is part of the war of nerves?" "No," the answer comes at once, "it's a question of manners." Presently Fischer arrives, and they all settle down in their seats.

The draw proceeds in two stages. Schmid invites Petrosian (as the older contestant) to choose one of two envelopes. Petrosian takes the one with his own name. Fischer is handed a white and a black pawn. He is visibly nervous and fiddles about with them for a long time with his hands under the table. He asks for smaller-sized pawns; these, he says, won't fit in his palms. No others are available. Finally Fischer hides his hands with the pawns behind his back. Petrosian quickly points to the right hand. It contains the black pawn. Fischer is satisfied, he smiles...

The sympathies of the Argentine chess fans, and indeed of many people far removed from chess but showing a keen interest in the match, were naturally divided. The sensational victories recently achieved by Fischer, his youth, his fanatical devotion to chess and even

some of his eccentricities make him a highly popular figure.

But Petrosian also had a good many supporters in Argentina, no fewer, I think, than his opponent. There are explanations for this. In Argentina there are large numbers of immigrants from Eastern Europe and around 600,000 Armenians. They were born in various countries, many of them have never set foot in Armenia, and yet there are many, irrespective of their political and religious convictions, who consider Soviet Armenia to be their true homeland. They take a lively interest in its life and its achievements; they view the eminent representatives of its sciences, culture and art with respect and love. These feelings were extended to Tigran Petrosian too.

But that is nowhere near a full explanation for the large number of people sympathizing with the Soviet Grandmaster. On this subject we need only point to Tigran's amiable, sociable character in contrast to the introverted and aloof Bobby, who would now and then refrain from returning a greeting or shaking someone's hand or giving an autograph – not perhaps with the deliberate aim of giving offence, but as the result of some permanent inward detachment. Another question, which is best left to psychologists to answer, is how far this difference of characters affects the course of the intellectual struggle on the chessboard.

When Petrosian resigned the first game, the spectators rose to their feet and there was a burst of loud and lasting applause. During those unpleasant minutes we stood like the rest, feeling bitterness and disappointment not merely on account of the loss but also because an excellent opening novelty had been "wasted" and chances of a draw in the endgame had been missed. But five days later, when Fischer, grown pale in the face and drenched in sweat, stopped the clock after 32 moves and held out his hand to Tigran, the hall erupted with an ovation that far surpassed the previous one in

both vehemence and duration. We were then able to appreciate the goodwill and objectivity of the Argentinians...

All who followed this contest – those who did so from afar, as well as those who witnessed it in person – formed the impression that there were two Fischers in the match and two Petrosians, and that the sixth game was the boundary where the change-over occurred. Indeed, as has more than once been observed, the first five games – notwithstanding the level score – proceeded under the obvious ascendancy of the Soviet Grandmaster, whereas the remaining four were patently dominated by the American who coolly, with machine-like logic, began picking up point after point. In the first five games, Fischer the hero of Vancouver and Denver was absent; in the last four, there was none of the usual Petrosian – the subtle positional player who senses danger a long way off and intercepts it, the solid and ingenious defender.

It would seem that it was not the sixth game but the third that had a greater psychological and practical bearing on the course of the contest. After enduring White's prolonged pressure on his weakened kingside, Petrosian reached a major piece ending with good winning chances, but at that moment, fatigued by the tense struggle, he overlooked a threefold repetition of the position.

I would stress that he overlooked it – he wasn't deliberately assenting to a draw, as some people supposed. When Fischer called the arbiter and told him in English that he was claiming a draw after 34. ♖e2, Petrosian at first didn't even understand what this was about. It was only after Schmid went backstage to check the position on another board that Petrosian fell to studying his scoresheet. Fischer jumped up and went after the arbiter to assure himself of the draw straight away. Petrosian was no less distressed by this result than by the loss in game one. However strong Fischer may be at

present, he finds it just as hard to bear losing as he ever did, and it is difficult to say whether a second loss in succession would have altered the whole course and outcome of the match struggle...

* * *

Undoubtedly one of the people most interested in the outcome of the Petrosian – Fischer match was Boris Spassky. It was he, after all, who would have to confront the victor of this contest, the last one in the Candidates cycle. Spassky twice appeared on Soviet television to comment on the course of the match, sharing his impressions with millions of lovers of chess.

Here is a condensed record of his second appearance, which took place when the match was already over.

If you remember, my first appearance here began on a high note, as they say, and ended on a low one. After five games I already felt that it was dangerous for Petrosian to get into time trouble so often. In chess games this is well known to play a very important part.

Allow me to recall briefly what I said last time. I said that in the first game, after Petrosian had "caught" Fischer in a variation he had prepared at home, he could count on finishing the game with a positive result. But it was not to be. Worse, Petrosian even lost the game. I felt then, and I still feel now, that this fact should have affected him in the most ruinous way.

And yet in the second game, as it seems to me, something unforeseen occurred. Petrosian was able to score a victory in brilliant style. It gave the impression that he had wholly cast off his chains. This was Fischer's first loss in all his Candidates matches. It is completely obvious that Petrosian had gained an immense moral advantage, which I feel he had to consolidate and develop – I am deeply convinced of this.

And indeed, the match continued in such a way that as early as the third game, playing with Black, Petrosian exerted very strong pressure on Fischer's position. As we know, the game ended rather surprisingly: Petrosian allowed a threefold repetition of the position. Personally I wouldn't know whether this was an oversight, a mistake on Petrosian's part, or whether perhaps he thought that it wasn't particularly in his interest to continue the fight in those circumstances. In the press afterwards, the assertion cropped up that this result *was* a mistake for Petrosian. In any case it was a trump for Fischer, who had managed to escape defeat.

On the subject of the 4th game, I permitted myself to criticize Tigran Vartanovich for basically shying away from a fight although playing with the white pieces. I think that if one of the contestants in a match has a moral advantage, it sometimes makes sense for him to take a risk, to play to win – and even if he doesn't succeed, the fighting spirit that he retains can compensate for a loss, it can make up for the expenditure of nerves.

The way the fifth game went, Petrosian outplayed Fischer in a quiet manoeuvring contest. In the fifth hour of play, when he should have undertaken energetic measures to reap the fruits of his strategy, Petrosian was unable to do so, perhaps on account of nervous fatigue. At that stage I stated my opinion that we had yet to see Fischer in this match, and I suggested that it wasn't so much Fischer who might win the match as Petrosian who might lose it. To be sure, this was not stated so directly and openly.

And yet what happened was something that many enthusiasts, including me, had not expected. If after the fifth game someone had said that the opponents were only going to play four games more, and that the match was going to end that way, as a brilliant victory for Fischer – then I think that all too small

a percentage of the chess fans would have believed it.

It happened nonetheless. The final games are in stark contrast, you might say, to the first five. The impression is that Petrosian turned down his competitive voltage too suddenly, and abandoned the fight in the concluding games. I feel that in short matches – and I have played six such matches in my chess career – you must, you absolutely *must* fight to the end, even if sometimes you experience a health problem of one kind or another...

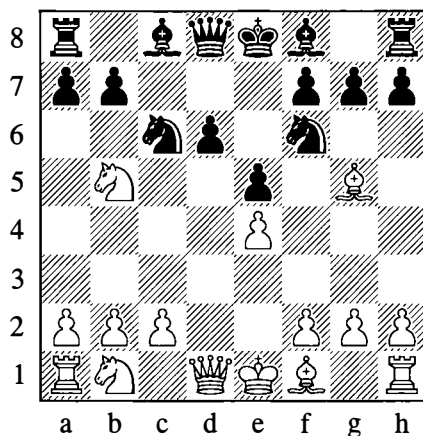
GAME 97

Robert James Fischer – Tigran Petrosian

Buenos Aires (1) 1971

Notes by Korchnoi and Furman

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♖c6
5.♘b5 d6 6.♙f4 e5 7.♙e3 ♘f6 8.♙g5



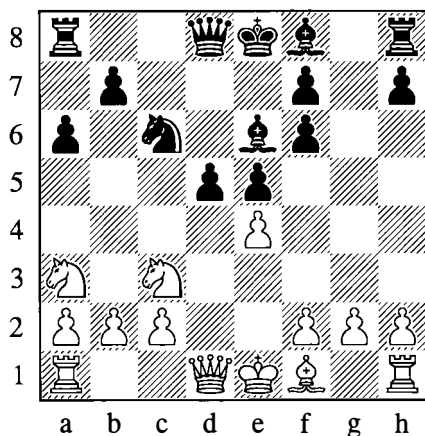
The variation that Fischer selects had already brought him some valuable wins, notably in the 2nd and 6th games of his match with Taimanov (Vancouver 1971). We should note that if Black anticipates the dangerous pin against his knight on f6 by playing ...a7-a6 on move 7, then after 7...a6 8.♘5c3 ♘f6

9.♙c4 ♖e7 10.♘d5 White has a small but stable plus; Bronstein – Furman, Tallinn 1971.

8...♙e6

This is better than 8...♖a5† 9.♗d2 ♘xe4 10.♖xa5 ♘xa5 11.♙e3, as in the second Fischer – Taimanov match game.

9.♘1c3 a6 10.♙xf6 gxf6 11.♘a3 d5!



In our view this move, which had not been played before, alters the assessment of the entire variation. Petrosian had analysed it long before the match, and then, with a month to go, he took the decision to employ the variation in one of the very first match games.

12.exd5

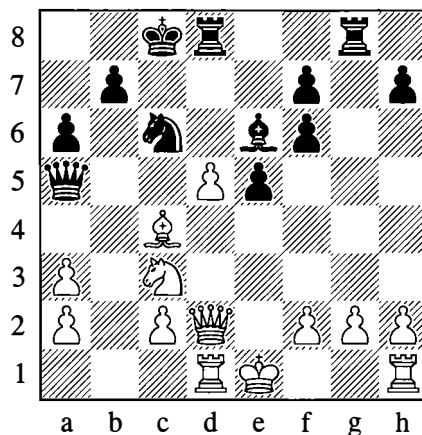
Likewise after 12.♘d5 ♙xa3 13.bxa3 ♖a5† 14.♗d2 ♖xd2† 15.♙xd2 0–0–0, with 16...f5 to follow, Black has no difficulties.

12...♙xa3 13.bxa3 ♖a5 14.♗d2 0–0–0 15.♙c4 ♖hg8!

[Ed. note: According to Petrosian, “It is in the discovery of this very strong move that Vecheslav Chebanenko’s merit lies, for everything that has happened up to here has been fairly obvious and has not promised Black any great joy.”]

For the sacrificed pawn, Black has a big lead in development. Now 16.0–0 fails to 16...♙h3.

16.♖d1!



16...♙f5

[Ed. note: To quote Petrosian, “The question why I didn’t play ...♖xg2 is not so simple for me to answer.”]

It would appear that Petrosian, who had begun the game in combative mood, decided from this moment to play for a draw. It’s easy to see that 16...♖g4 fails to 17.♙d3 (not 17.♙b3? ♖d4 18.♖e3 ♙xd5); Black has to give up the exchange to save his piece, and after 17...♖xd5 18.♘xd5 ♖xd5 19.f3 his compensation is insufficient.

Why the ex-World Champion refrained from 16...♖xg2! is harder to explain.

White would not succeed if he tried to win a piece by 17.♖e3 ♘d4 18.♙f1 ♘xc2 19.♖f3 (19.♖d3 ♖g4; 19.♖d2 ♙h3), as after 19...♖xf2†! Black has a winning attack.

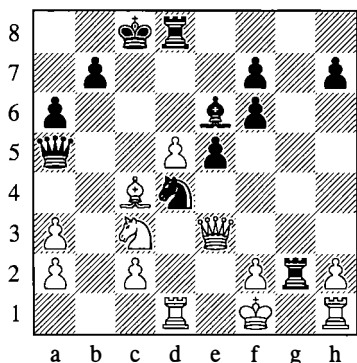
Against 17.♘e4, Black could choose between the cool-headed 17...♖g6 (for example 18.♖xa5 ♘xa5 19.dxe6 ♘xc4 20.exf7 ♖f8 21.♖d5 b6), and the outwardly more active 17...♙g4 (18.♖xa5 ♘xa5 19.♙e2 ♙xe2 20.♙xe2 ♖g6 21.♘g3 ♘c4). In either case the ending offers roughly equal chances.

Finally (after 16...♖xg2 17.♘e4), another move was suggested after the match by Petrosian’s coaches: 17...♖b6!?. Black threatens

18...♔g4 or 18...♖d4, so 18.♖e3 is forced. Now after 18...♖d4 19.♗f1 Black would have to surrender material for inadequate compensation, for example: 19...♔g4 20.♗xg2 ♕f3† 21.♖xf3 ♖xf3 22.♗xf3 f5 23.♖d2!. Therefore, once again, he should go into an ending: 18...♖xe3 19.fxe3 ♔g4! 20.♖c1! ♕f3 21.♖xf6 ♖e7!, with threats of ...e5-e4, ...♖g6 or ...♖d6 – so that in spite of his material plus, White will have to struggle for the draw.

We would add that another manoeuvre (from the diagram position) also deserved attention: 16...♔g4 17.f3 ♕f5. This way Black deters White from either castling or attempting to exchange the light-squared bishops with ♕d3. White would probably defend with 18.♖e4 ♖xg2 19.♖xa5 ♖xa5 20.♕d3 ♖xd5 21.♖xf6. Then 21...♕xd3 22.♖xd5 ♖e2† would lead to a draw, but instead Black could play for a win without much risk, for example 21...♖xd3! 22.cxd3 ♖xa2.

[Ed. note: the position after 16...♖xg2 17.♖e3 ♖d4 18.♗f1 was analysed by Timman, Dvoretsky and Kasparov.



(a) Doubt was cast on the variation 18...♖xc2?! 19.♖d3 ♖g4, in view of 20.dxe6! ♖xd3 21.♖xd3. Then on 21...♖xc4, White can choose between 22.e7!? and 22.exf7 (Timman).

(b) Instead, Black can play to attack the king: 18...♔g4! 19.♗xg2 ♕f3† 20.♗h3 ♖c7! 21.♖xd4 ♖d7† 22.♗h4 ♖f5 23.♖h6 exd4,

and Black wins (Timman, Dvoretsky).

(c) Kasparov also examines 18...♖f5! 19.♖a7 (19.♖f3 ♖h4 20.♖e3 ♕d7 21.♖e4 ♖g4! is also in Black's favour) 19...♖xc3 20.♕xa6 ♕xd5 21.♖xd5 ♖xf2†! 22.♗xf2 ♖xc2†, winning for Black.]

17.♕d3 ♕xd3

The immediate 17...♖d4 would transpose into the game continuation after 18.♕xf5† ♖xf5 19.♖d3 ♖d4 (seeing that 19...♖h4 20.g3 e4 21.♖c4† ♗b8 22.♖b4! would scarcely benefit Black after 22...♖xb4 23.axb4 ♖c8 24.♖xe4 ♖ge8 25.gxh4 ♖xe4† 26.♗d2).

[Ed. note: Kasparov considers 17...e4! to be the best move in this position; then after 18.♖xe4 ♕xe4 or 18...♖xd5, Black has a comfortable game.]

18.♖xd3 ♖d4 19.0-0 ♗b8 20.♗h1

Black was threatening 20...♖xc3.

20...♖xa3

The alternative 20...♖c8 21.♖e4 ♖xd5 22.c3 f5 23.♖g3 f4 24.cxd4 fxg3 (24...exd4 25.♖xh7) 25.fxg3 e4 26.♖b3 doesn't guarantee a certain draw either – White does have an extra pawn.

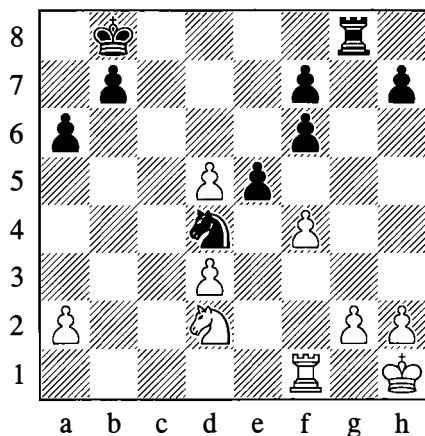
21.f4 ♖c8 22.♖e4 ♖xd3

At first, 22...♖xa2 seemed to us to be stronger; if then 23.♖xf6, Black unexpectedly seizes the initiative with 23...♖xg2! and compels his opponent to seek the draw. However, White would play 23.♖d2! ♖xc2 24.♖xc2 ♖xc2 25.♖e2!, and despite his material plus, it's hard for Black to defend. The passed d-pawn is very strong, and Black is losing his f6-pawn.

23.cxd3 ♖c2 24.♖d2!

It's imperative to exchange off Black's actively placed rook. Otherwise, after 24.g3 ♖xa2 25.♖xf6 ♖c8!, the other one will come and join it.

24...♖xd2 25.♜xd2



White is first to proceed with the attack against his opponent's kingside weaknesses. Now on 25...♖d8, either 26.fxe5 or 26.♜e4 would be unpleasant, winning material in both cases. If Black tries 25...♖e8 – aiming to meet 26.♜e4 with 26...exf4 27.♜xf6 ♖e2 28.♜xh7 f3! 29.gxf3 ♖xa2, when the black pieces become very active – then 26.f5!, with 27.♜e4 to follow, is strong.

25...f5!

A difficult move which is indisputably the best in this position.

26.fxe5 ♖e8 27.♖e1

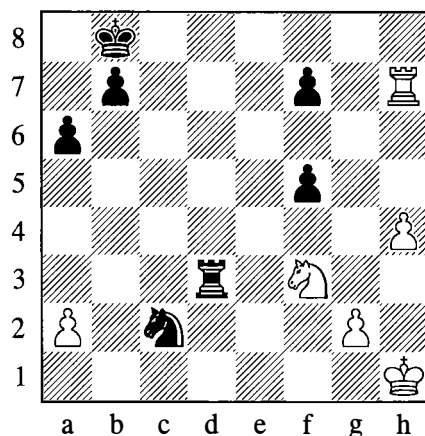
Of course 27.♜c4? would be bad owing to 27...b5, when Black wins his pawn back and gains the advantage.

27...♜c2 28.♖e2 ♜d4

Here Petrosian offered a draw – prematurely, as the further course of the game shows. To achieve equality, some precise play from Black is still required.

[Ed. note: According to Petrosian, "Contrary to what was stated in the press, I did not offer a draw in the first game."]

29.♖e3 ♜c2 30.♖h3 ♖xe5 31.♜f3 ♖xd5 32.♖xh7 ♖xd3 33.h4



In a relatively simple situation, feeling the pressure of the clock, Petrosian underestimates the danger from the passed h-pawn and loses quickly. After 33...♜d4, the game would end in a draw: 34.♜e5 ♖e3 35.♜xf7 f4 36.h5 f3 37.gxf3 ♜xf3 38.♜g2 ♜h4† 39.♜f2 ♖f3† 40.♜e2 ♖f6 41.h6 ♜f5, and White cannot improve his position. Exchanging on d4 is also inadequate to win, for instance: 34.♜xd4 ♖xd4 35.♜h2 f6 36.♜g3 (or 36.♜h3 ♖d3† 37.g3 f4) 36...♖g4† 37.♜h3 ♖g6, and the draw is not far off.

33...♜e3?! 34.♖xf7 ♖d1†

This move too is inaccurate. It was worth considering 34...♜c8, so as to meet 35.h5 with 35...♖d1† 36.♜h2 ♖d7!, endeavouring to exchange rooks.

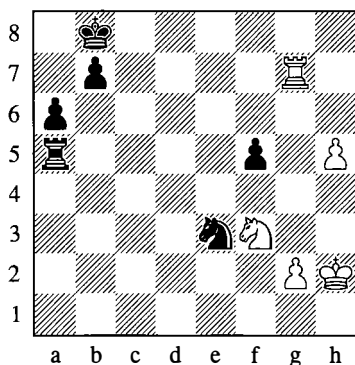
35.♜h2 ♖a1?

It was still not too late to play 35...♜c8.

36.h5 f4?

A gross error in time trouble. After 36...♖xa2 37.♜h3 ♖a1 or 37.♖g7 ♜g4†, White would still have some work to do. Now the fight is over in a few moves.

[Ed. note: According to Kasparov's analysis, after 36...♖xa2! 37.♜g7!, Black could have saved himself by 37...♖a5!.



The idea is that on 38.♜g3, Black draws elegantly with 38...f4! 39.♜xf4 ♜xg2† 40.♜xg2 (after 40.♜g4 ♜e3† White still has to consent to the loss of his h5-pawn) 40...♜xh5.

Against the better 38.♜g5, the manoeuvre 38...♖a2! holds the position. The key variation runs: 39.h6 ♜g4† 40.♜xg4 f×g4 41.h7 g×f3 42.h8=♖† ♜a7 43.♖d4† ♜a8!, and Black manages to construct a fortress. He also holds on in other variations (see Kasparov, *My Great Predecessors*, volume 4). Of course, such discoveries are only within the powers of a computer, not of a human being suffering from fatigue and time shortage after a dramatic struggle.]

37.♜xf4 ♖xa2 38.♜e4 ♜xg2 39.♜g3 ♖a5 40.♜e5

Black resigned.

1–0

GAME 98

Tigran Petrosian – Robert James Fischer

Buenos Aires (2) 1971

1.d4 ♜f6 2.c4 g6 3.♜c3 d5 4.♜f4 ♜g7 5.e3 c5!?

The books recommend 5...0–0!.

6.dxc5 ♖a5 7.♜c1 ♜e4!

The strongest move. Black's attack on the c3-point looks dangerous. However, it turns out that "the devil isn't so terrible as he is painted", as Petrosian convincingly demonstrates. [*Kholmov*]

8.cxd5! ♜xc3 9.♖d2

The move recommended by Boleslavsky.

9...♖xa2

On 9...♖xc5, White retains a plus with 10.♜e2. The variation 9...0–0 10.♜e2 ♜xe2 11.♖xa5 ♜xc1 12.♖d2 ♜xa2 13.♜c4 is also unsatisfactory for Black. [*Petrosian, Suetin*]

10.bxc3

The continuation 10.♜xc3 0–0! would lead to complex play with about equal chances. [*Kholmov*]

10...♖a5

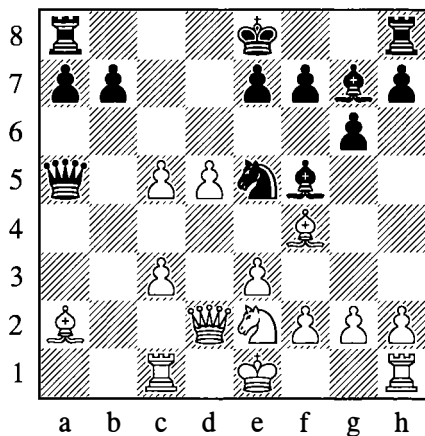
After 10...♖xd2† 11.♜xd2 ♜d7 12.♜b5 a6 13.♜xd7† ♜xd7 14.e4 ♜c8 15.♜e3, Black might not succeed in recovering his pawn. [*Kholmov*]

11.♜c4 ♜d7 12.♜e2 ♜e5

After 12...♖xc5 13.♜a2 0–0 14.0–0 b5 15.c4! b4 16.e4 a5 17.♜e3 ♖c7 18.c5, the impression is that White has a "head start". In this line 14...♜f6 may be an improvement for Black, holding up e3–e4. But even so, the continuation 15.♜e5 b6 (or 15...♜e4 16.♖d4! with advantage to White) 16.♜d4 would give White a good game. The manoeuvre that Black devises also fails to solve his problems – he is now behind in development. [*Kholmov*]

13.♜a2 ♜f5?

There would be approximate equality after 13...♖xc5. [*Kholmov*]

**14...xe5!**

Eliminating the important knight on which Black had set such great hopes! Black's manoeuvre would have justified itself in the case of 14.0-0? d3 15.Ba1 dxf4 16.dxf4 Bxc5, or 14.b1? d4 15.Ba2 Bxc5 16.exf5 gxf5 with good play. [*Kholmov*]

14...xe5 15.d4! Bxc5

Retreating with 15...d7 would lead to a big advantage for White after 16.c6 bxc6 17.dxc6 d8 18.f4. [*Petrosian, Suetin*]

16.dxf5 gxf5 17.0-0 Ba5

In his book *How to Beat Bobby Fischer*, Edmar Mednis considers this move the decisive mistake. The logical course was to play 17...f4, and then after 18.exf4 d6 to castle queenside. Of course White's superiority would persist, but victory would still be a long, long way away.

18.Bc2! f4

After 18...f6 19.b3 Bc8 20.c4 e6 21.c5, or 18...Bc8 19.Bxf5 Bc7 20.f4 dxc3 21.d6! exd6 22.exf7+, White would retain a large plus. [*Teschner*]

19.c4! fxe3

By playing 19...b6 Black could hinder the further advance of the c-pawn, but then after

20.exf4 dxf4 21.Bce1 d6 22.b1 with the threat of 23.Bb2, White would maintain a fine attacking position with equal material. [*Kholmov*]

20.c5! Bd2

Not a bad chance. Black aims to bring his queen across to the kingside, and this may be the best decision. [*Kholmov*]

21.Ba4+ f8

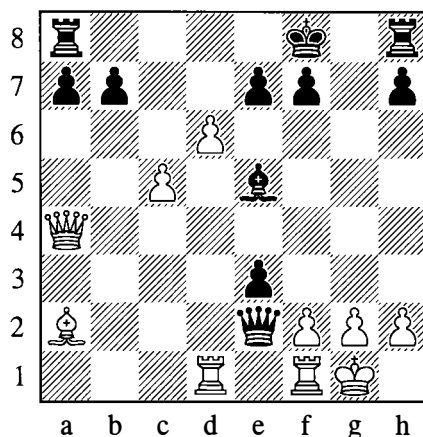
On 21...d8 White similarly plays 22.Bcd1. He then wins after either 22...exf2+ 23.Bxf2 dxf2+ 24.f1 Bh6 25.d6 exd6 26.Bxf7, or 22...e2 23.Bxd2 dxf2+ 24.f2 e1=B 25.d6.

22.Bcd1

Simplest. White is prepared to sacrifice the exchange to maintain the attack. However, the positional 22.Bc2! may have been even more effective. [*Mednis*]

22...Bc2 23.d6?!

The chess world admired this move, yet Petrosian himself later recommended 23.g3!. [*Mednis*]

**23...Bh5?**

The Moscow Candidate Master I. Loktev came up with an interesting idea for the defence. It consists of stopping White

from opening the f-file. And indeed after 23...♙h2†!, which incidentally escaped even Fischer's attention, Black does have chances to defend successfully. For example: 24.♙xh2 ♖h5† 25.♙g1 e2, and now:

(a) 26.♖d3? ♖h1†!

(b) 26.dxe7† ♙g7 27.♖d5 exf1=♖† 28.♙xf1 ♖g6! 29.♖d4† f6 30.♖d8 h5 31.♖d7 ♙h6.

(c) 26.♖d4! with these possibilities:

(c1) If 26...exf1=♖† at once, then after 27.♖xf1 f6 White wins with the exceptionally subtle 28.♖e1!!.. Now on 28...♖e8, White has 29.d7 ♖d8 30.♖xe7!. If instead 28...e5, then 29.♖d5, and there is no defence against the threats of 30.♖xb7 and 30.♖e3.

(c2) 26...f6 27.♖d3 exf1=♖† 28.♙xf1 ♖h1† 29.♙e2 ♖h5† 30.♙d2 ♖g5† 31.♙d1 ♖h5† 32.♙c1 ♖g5† 33.♙c2 ♖f5!, and White appears to have nothing decisive.

24.f4 e2?

After 24...♙f6! Black's defensive potential would still be very great. [*Kholmov*]

25.fxe5 exd1=♖ 26.♖xd1 ♖xe5 27.♖f1 f6

Nor would 27...♖xc5† help, in view of 28.♙h1 b5 (or 28...f6 29.♖b3 ♖h5 30.♖e6) 29.♖e4!, and White wins. [*Kholmov*]

28.♖b3 ♙g7

After 28...e6 29.♖xb7 ♖e8 30.c6 it would be time for Black to resign.

29.♖f7† ♙h6 30.dxe7 f5

The strongest answer to 30...♖hg8 is 31.♙b1!. [*Petrosian, Suetin*]

31.♖xf5 ♖d4† 32.♙h1

Black resigned.

1-0

Analysing how the match went, the FIDE President, Grandmaster Max Euwe, observed: "Overall, the Petrosian – Fischer match may

be divided into two absolutely different duels: the first five games with a score of 2½:2½, and the final games with a score of 4:0 to Fischer." What had happened between them? Here is what Petrosian had to say about game six, which he had adjourned a pawn down: "I was unfaithful to my constant principle of having a clear head and a good general idea of the position. This is better than playing on when you are tired, even after the most thorough study of all possible continuations. My play after resumption was terrible, in effect I lost without a fight. After the sixth game Fischer truly became a genius, but as for me – whether I went to pieces or wore myself out, or whether there were any other reasons, in the 7th, 8th and 9th games I was no longer playing chess."

At the end of 1971 in Moscow, the Alekhine Memorial tournament was held, to mark the 25th anniversary of that great Russian chessplayer's death. Practically all the strongest players in the country took part, including all the Soviet World Champions except Botvinnik (who had ended his competitive career in 1970). Of these, the most successful was Smyslov (finishing 3rd), but the victors, sharing 1st-2nd places, were the 20-year old Anatoly Karpov and the winner of three Soviet Championships, Leonid Stein. Petrosian shared 4th-5th places with Tukmakov, ahead of World Champion Spassky. A worthy performance, considering the stress he had endured in his match with Fischer not long before. Petrosian's verdict on Karpov, which was to prove prophetic, is all the more interesting: "At the present time I think Karpov is our main hope; perhaps in the next few years he and no one else will be the most difficult barrier for western players to overcome on the road to the world chess crown."

Spassky's defeat in the match with Fischer

that took place in the summer of 1972 was not without its consequences. Spassky took an extended “time-out” and declined to play for the Soviet team in the 22nd Olympiad that same year in Skopje. It was Petrosian who headed the Olympiad team once again. In the final group, the going was not easy: in the first four rounds, games were lost by Korchnoi, Petrosian, Karpov and Savon (the USSR Champion was generally playing poorly, and he only took part in four of the final group matches). But in the concluding third of the Olympiad, with five of them participating, our Grandmasters did after all wring the victory from their fierce rivalry with the Hungarians. This Olympiad was the only one in which Petrosian ever lost a game – and it was against Huebner (who, we would add, “won” the tournament of top-board players). His result as a whole was nonetheless respectable (+6 –1 =9). In the remaining two Olympiads in which he was destined to take part, Petrosian never lost. True, he was no longer at the head of the team; the next Candidates cycle brought Anatoly Karpov to the fore as the new leader of Soviet chess.

The last notable event of 1972 was the international tournament in San Antonio (USA). Among the 16 participants were such eminent Grandmasters as Larsen, Portisch, Gligoric, Hort and Mecking, while the Soviet Union was represented by Karpov, Petrosian and Keres. Petrosian succeeded in coming through the tournament without defeat and sharing 1st-3rd places with Karpov and Portisch. His article “The Taste of ‘Fried Chicken’” was distinguished by objectivity and generosity towards his opponents:

On New Year’s Eve, Keres, Karpov and I returned from the USA, where in the state of Texas, in the city of San Antonio, a major international chess tournament had taken place. A fair amount has been written about this tournament in our media, its results are widely known; nonetheless I venture to add a few things to what has been said already. I may partly be repeating old information, but from the fresh perspective of an eye-witness and a participant in the contests that have just finished.

Let me begin with the name of the event, which to us became known simply as the tournament in San Antonio, but in America was sometimes called the first Church international tournament, and sometimes the Fried Chicken tournament. The point is that this contest, like most other chess contests abroad, was conducted under private sponsorship. Its initiator and organizer was the Texas businessman George Church, who made his fortune from the sale of fried chicken and is now the head of a commercial firm that controls a large chain of restaurants, shops and gas stations. It is hard to say how strong Mr Church’s “love of chess” is, and how long “fried chicken” will remain on the world chess menu; but although the San Antonio tournament was not the greatest chess contest in the history of America, as its organizers had wanted it to be, it was still a notable enough event and would have done credit to any European country with more stable and longer established chess traditions.

The route to the venue was long and very hard: London, New York, Dallas, and finally San Antonio. In New York, the feeling of walking at the bottom of a huge pit was constantly with us. Dallas even now is haunted by the acute impression of that tragic gunshot from long ago. But San Antonio is welcoming and quiet. We stepped down from the aircraft onto a carpet, and made our way along its red nylon path to the airport terminal. It turns out that they have a special “red carpet” committee, to organize a reception for particularly welcome and respected visitors.

I would like to say straight away that at Dallas Airport we had already had the feeling that

there is a distinct chess boom in the USA at the present time. In the kiosks, together with alcohol and tobacco products, in among the tourist souvenirs, you could see pocket magnetic chess sets and dozens of chess books, either translated or original works. The strongest European masters and Grandmasters travel the country giving lectures and simultaneous displays. It was there in Dallas that we met up with an exhausted Portisch. His look was haggard – he had just given a simultaneous on 65 boards. This may to some extent explain his more than timid start in the tournament.

Why was Fischer not participating? To this question, the American master George Koltanowski, who was one of the initiators of the Fried Chicken event, gave me an answer that was part joking, part serious: “Since there was a danger that Bobby might demand the whole of Mr Church’s business as his fee, we decided not to invite him.”

San Antonio is a city with 750,000 inhabitants, but we were quartered in an old district that has kept the traditions of small American towns with a fairly tranquil and sedate lifestyle. If it had not been for the television (from six in the morning until late at night), we would hardly have felt the turbulent rhythm of present-day America.

Considering that our stay in San Antonio coincided with the USSR Championship and with the strong Palma de Mallorca tournament, and that in England they were already preparing for the traditional Hastings congress, the list of entries for our own tournament looked fairly convincing.

The participation of Bent Larsen, who always aspires to nothing but first place, was itself enough to create that combative tone which is essential to any major tournament. The young Walter Browne, Henrique Mecking and Julio Kaplan – three hopes of Western chess – added to the excitement. Despite this, events unfolded slowly and a trifle monotonously.

Keres and Karpov took the lead at the start, and for a long time they didn’t let anyone else come near them. After 8 rounds, they each had 7 points! At that stage Portisch had a mere 4½, and I myself had only 5.

Such was the start. What can I say about the tournament participants now that everything is finished? The tournament included a large group of experienced and well-known players including Grandmasters Gligoric, Hort and Evans. But this time they did not set the tone, so I will refrain from assessing their creative and competitive profiles.

Let us speak of those who were in the fight for first place and fulfilled or disappointed the expectations of their supporters.

Our own Anatoly Karpov made a specially good showing in the tournament. It is not without reason that people both in our country and abroad see a great future for this young and talented Grandmaster. He made an excellent impression on me, both as a chessplayer and as a person.

Admittedly I fear that my association with Karpov at San Antonio may “cost me dear”. I discovered that Anatoly is a passionate philatelist. I myself had never before been seriously keen on collecting stamps. I might now and then have given some stamps with chess motifs to my friends as presents, and kept one of each type for myself as a souvenir, for no particular reason. My relations with Karpov, an enthusiastic and knowledgeable collector, shook me out of my indifference to this hobby. At any rate, after returning from San Antonio, I began to regard the stamps in my possession as a collection, and it seems that for the first time I used the word “duplicates” for some stamps I bought for friends...

But let us come back to the chess. More than any of us, Karpov had it in him to be the sole

winner of the tournament. He ought not to have lost his game against Portisch. Dropping that half point was unpleasant, but he might have made up for it. However, the fact that two rounds before the end, worn out by the heavy burden of leading, he was unable to win against Kaplan, proved decisive. Instead of coming first outright, he shared 1st-3rd places with Portisch and me.

"Excuse me," the reader will say, "What about his last-round game, a short draw without any fight?" This is a sin that Karpov also shares with me. Towards the end of the tournament we were both very tired (I didn't feel completely well), and we decided not to tempt fate with Portisch breathing down our necks at the finish.

Portisch's win against Larsen could of course have been foreseen. But the last round differs from all the others in that a mistake at this stage cannot be rectified. Karpov and I came separately to the same conclusion, especially since in this case a bird in the hand was in in some measure the same as two in the bush.

I have already mentioned that Lajos Portisch began the tournament very badly. In the first round he failed to win with the exchange up against Campos. This was followed by a series of draws and a loss to Gligoric. It seemed that Portisch wasn't even thinking about fighting for first place. And most likely that was the case. Even in the penultimate round, Portisch had the better position against Browne but offered a draw. Browne refused. They played on until only the kings were left, but it was Browne, not Portisch, who displayed enthusiasm and persistence. It was only his last-round win against a demoralized Larsen that enabled Portisch to break into the top bracket.

Portisch is definitely a very strong player. He played especially well against us Soviet contenders. He defeated Karpov and Keres, and drew with me.

Let me say a special word about my own game with Portisch. He has always been a tough opponent for me. I have never yet won a single game against him, and I have lost four. And this time, I already realized by move 14 that my position was difficult. The game continued as an extremely sharp struggle. There was a moment when Portisch simply overlooked a forced win. Afterwards, in search of counter-chances, I gave up the exchange, and for a long time Portisch couldn't understand whether I had blundered or made a sacrifice. It seems to me now that against any other opponent I would have won that game. But the man in front of me was Portisch, and I was instinctively drawn towards a peaceful outcome to the fight. With my own play in the tournament I am more or less satisfied. For a long period, not feeling very happy with the draw which had given me White against, for example, Smith, I remained in the shadows with a so-called "plus two" score (wins against Smith and Gligoric); but I finished strongly, and by the final round I was already on "plus six".

My game against Larsen was very important. By winning it, I opened the way for myself to fight for first place, while Larsen was put off his stride for good.

It is a banal truth that to play well, you have to play often. For me, the past year has been, to put it mildly, a light one. Up until the Olympiad in Skopje, I had played 25 games in all, so of course I was not in form. Hopefully 1973 will bring me more substantial tournament practice.

Bent Larsen's play in this tournament was more superficial than usual, and he shared 8th-9th places. For a player who every time fights for first place and nothing else, this was a major failure. How accidental was it?

The reason for Larsen's great chess successes was revealed to me one day at a tournament in Yugoslavia. This was in 1970. Larsen was playing Black against the well-known chess correspondent and International Master Mario Bertok. The game was adjourned, and on resumption Larsen had

the problem of choosing between two continuations. The first – the normal one, in keeping with the nature of the position – would lead to a draw. The second – the dubious one – would lead to a loss for Larsen if Bertok made the correct reply, but the wrong reply would give Larsen the win. Larsen chose the second continuation; Bertok went wrong, and lost. I asked Larsen what his grounds for taking that decision were. He answered: “Say there are three games. If I play them your way, correctly, against strong master opponents, I’ll score a point and half. On the other hand if I play my own way, I may be punished in one of the three cases, but I’ll score two out of three all the same, and that’s what suits me better.”

The San Antonio tournament punished Larsen severely; his two out of three eluded him.

Paul Keres, of course, was unlucky. He led for a long time, but it seems to me that he broke an important rule. A chessplayer, just like anyone else, needs to be aware of his own condition; he has to take account of it, he cannot disregard its peculiarities. Keres played in a heedlessly youthful manner. And by the 6th round he had shot his bolt. A decline was bound to set in. Already in his game with Larsen, Keres landed in a difficult position but then extricated himself. The game was adjourned, and the queen ending appeared to yield a draw in all variations. Losing such a game was impossible, and yet Larsen contrived to do so. The unexpected point gave Keres new strength, but alas, not for long. Soon afterwards, losing to Evans and drawing with Smith, he forfeited his chances of a place worthy of his high class.

Now a few words on the subject of the young foreign players whose names I have already mentioned but who are worth speaking about in more detail.

Henrique Mecking dreams of crossing swords with Fischer; he supposes he can fight for the World Championship. Indeed he doesn’t play badly. He may improve, but I am convinced he will never become World Champion. The main reason is the narrowness of his chess thinking. Mecking doesn’t understand, for instance, the significance of weak and strong squares. I have played him three times. In 1968 he lost to me because his light squares were weak. A year later he made me an easy present of all the dark squares, and again he suffered defeat. And in the San Antonio tournament, Grandmaster Mecking once again gave me dark-square control, and with it victory. Mecking is distinguished by his lively piece play, but he lacks true understanding of the underlying features of the position, and this makes me have doubts about his future as a player.

Mecking’s behaviour at the board is also unpleasant; it is out of order, deliberately annoying his opponents.

The association with “fried chicken” cast its shadow over the organization of the contest – the chessboards were arranged on restaurant tables, covered with white tablecloths. And Mecking did not fail to make use of this. His game with me was adjourned and he sealed a losing move, but on resumption I rather dragged out the process of converting my advantage. Mecking had his elbows on the tablecloth and started moving them about, jerking the board from side to side – while Harry Golombek, the chief arbiter, paid no attention and gave him no serious reprimand.

Another episode occurred in Mecking’s game with Browne. Here Mecking’s misdemeanour was even worse. They were both in time trouble, but Browne’s flag was already hanging. Browne made his move and pressed the clock. Mecking at once re-started Browne’s clock and began, without hurrying, to adjust a piece that his opponent had positioned properly anyway. Browne was taken aback – he got flustered, blundered a pawn away, and lost the game.

I don’t know if the commercial match between Fischer and Mecking, which has been touted so much in the foreign press, will actually come about. (It will be of no chess interest to me

or, I suspect, to anyone else.) But if Mecking behaves the way he has been doing, then I feel that Fischer, for the first time, will have real and not imaginary reasons for appealing to the arbiters.

To conclude my brief remarks, I cannot help mentioning that Fischer put in an appearance for a few hours in San Antonio. He flew in on a private plane and conducted himself like a VIP guest who condescended to honour the tournament with his presence. On account of this, the start of the round was postponed by 15 minutes. Fischer overstayed his time. All this while, the FIDE President Max Euwe was waiting for him at the entrance from the street, in spite of the murky weather. These days Fischer is late not only for his own games, but for other people's too...

However, this incident did not darken the general impression of the tournament. In the literal and metaphorical senses, the Fried Chicken tasted good. It was pleasant to come away in the knowledge that in the trio of prizewinners, alongside the Hungarian Portisch, there were two representatives of the Soviet school of chess.

GAME 99

Henrique Mecking – Tigran Petrosian

San Antonio 1972

Notes by B. Larsen and T. Petrosian

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♖c3 ♖f6 4.♙g5 dxe4

When Petrosian plays this way, it's clear he is peaceably disposed. But should his opponent get over-optimistic... [Ed. note: Up to move 40, the annotations are Bent Larsen's.]

5.♖xe4 ♙e7 6.♖xf6†

The majority of specialists consider 6.♙xf6 to be stronger, but in response, Petrosian is

a connoisseur of the 6...gxf6 line. That way he even succeeded in gaining the advantage against Fischer in the 3rd game of their match (Buenos Aires 1971).

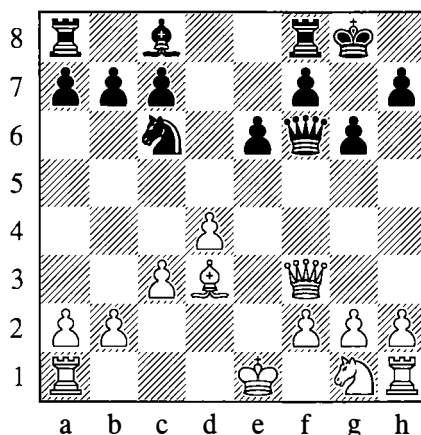
6...♙xf6 7.♙xf6 ♖xf6

Not a very interesting position. The best move for White here is probably 8.♖f3, but Mecking has other intentions.

8.c3 0-0 9.♙d3 ♖c6

White cannot prevent the advance ...e6-e5. Black already has a satisfactory position.

10.♖h5!? g6 11.♖f3



11...♖g7!

After 11...♖xf3 White would have a small plus. Now Black has a slightly weakened kingside, but the white pieces are not well placed.

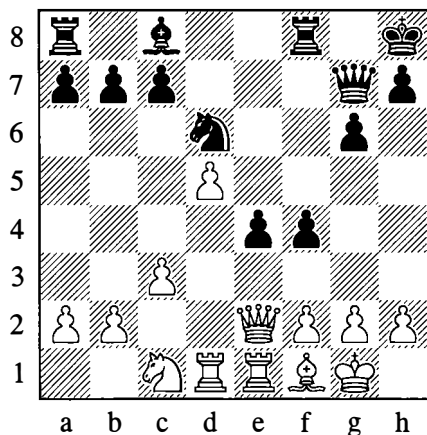
12.♖e2 e5 13.d5 ♖e7 14.0-0 f5 15.♙c4 ♖h8 16.♙ad1 f4!?

Very sharp! The white knight can't get to e4 in a hurry, and in some lines Black can play ...♖e7-f5-h4 followed by ...f4-f3.

17.♙fe1 ♖f5 18.♖c1 ♖d6

Not 18...♖h4 on account of 19.♖e4.

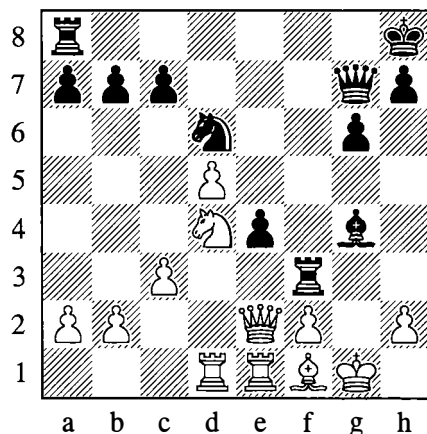
19.♟f1 e4 20.♞e2



20...f3?!

Most impatient, and not in Petrosian's style! By playing 20...♟d7 and then ...♞ae8, Black could obtain a very powerful position, even though White could exchange queens with ♞e2-d2-d4. After the move in the game, tactical play commences and White acquires counter-chances.

21.gxf3 ♞xf3 22.♟b3 ♟g4 23.♟d4!

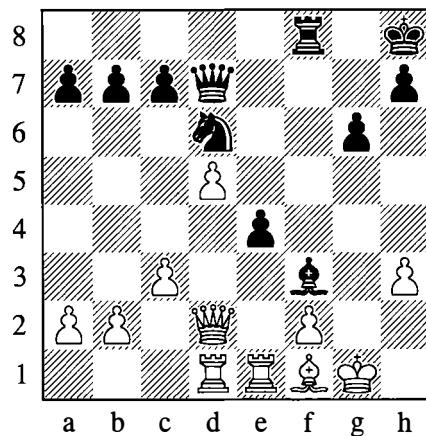


23...♞af8

The variation 23...♞f4 24.♞e3 would be very good for White. Sacrificing the exchange is Black's only logical continuation, but he can hardly have been planning it when he made his

20th move. I have been told that the players each made two offers of a draw. If that is the case, I would surmise that Mecking offered a draw at move 16, and Petrosian did so at this moment! If Black tries to win the exchange back at once, his e4-pawn will be weak.

24.♟xf3 ♟xf3 25.♞d2 ♞d7 26.h3



26...♟g8?!

This *is* in the Petrosian spirit! He places his king a little further away from menacing checks, and waits! Perhaps White could now have played 27.♞c1, but after 27...♞f5 28.c4 ♞h5 29.♞f4 ♞xh3 the point of 26...♟g8 would become clear – White cannot give mate with his queen on f8. It is true that White could play for a win with 30.♟g2, but the position would remain unclear.

27.♞e3?! ♟xd1 28.♞xd1 ♞f5

Black now has a very active position.

29.♞e2?! ♞g5† 30.♟g2 ♞f5

Black attacks the advanced pawn on d5 before White can create threats against the e4-pawn.

31.c4 ♟xc4 32.♞xe4 ♟d6

White has three isolated pawns, and the black knight is better than the white bishop.

I still cannot believe it – did Petrosian really offer a draw twice?

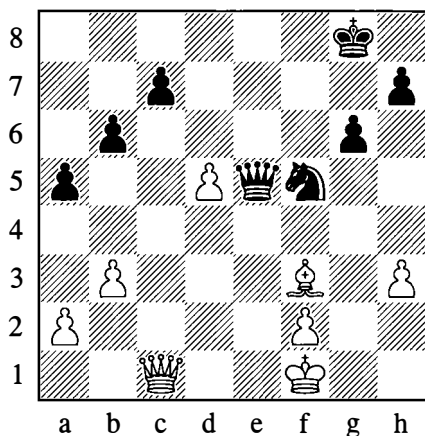
33.♖e3 ♖e5 34.♖xe5 ♖xe5 35.♖c1 ♖e7
36.♖c3 b6 37.b3

I would prefer 37.b4.

37...a5 38.♙f1 ♖g7! 39.♖c1 ♖e5?! 40.♙f3

The last move before the time control. I don't see a clear win for Black after 40.♖xc7 ♖a1†, and at all events White should have taken this opportunity – even though Black would retain some advantage after 41.♙e2 ♖xa2† 42.♙f1 ♖a1† 43.♙e2 ♖b2† 44.♙e1 ♖e5† 45.♙f1 ♖d4!.

40...♙f5



Black has a wonderful position with centralized pieces, and White has weak pawns.

[Ed. note: From here on, the annotations are Petrosian's own.]

41.♖g5 ♙g7 42.♙g2 ♖f6 43.♖f4 ♖d6

The pawn endgame after 43...♙h4† 44.♙g3 ♖xf4† 45.♙xf4 ♙xf3 46.♙xf3 ♙f6 47.♙e4 would suit White perfectly.

44.♖e4

A slightly better move was 44.♖a4. The queen would still remain on the 4th rank,

where it restrains the activity of Black's pieces to some extent and controls the important a4-e8 diagonal.

44...♙f6 45.♖c4 ♖e5

This gives White the chance to exchange a pair of pawns, reaching a position with few of them left – which benefits the defending side. On the other hand, White now has no possibility of exchanging his bishop for the knight whose activity enables Black to hope for victory.

46.b4 axb4 47.♖xb4 h5 48.♙e4 ♙d6 49.♙f3 ♙f7 50.♖b3 ♙g7 51.♖d3 ♙f6 52.♙d1 ♙f5 53.♙c2

White has lost patience. Either the course of events has tired him out, or the position was not to his taste. But transferring the bishop to a different diagonal is highly dubious.

53...♙g5 54.♖d2† ♖f4 55.♖c3

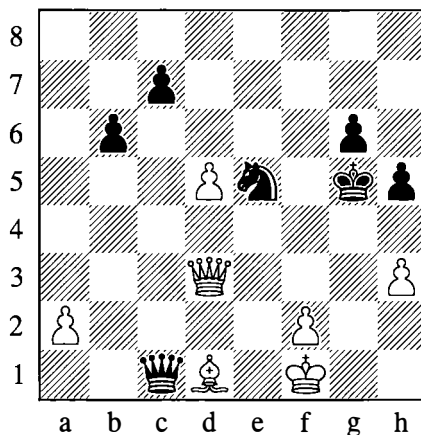
White could not of course exchange queens, as the black king would take up an excellent position on f4.

55...♙h4† 56.♙f1 ♙f3

The knight makes use of the fact that the bishop has abandoned its post. Now 57.♙g2 fails to 57...♖h2† with an immediate win.

57.♖d3 ♖c1† 58.♙d1 ♙e5

At this point the game was adjourned for the second time.



Mecking sealed his move quickly, and I had no doubt it would be 59.♖g3†. Then 59...♙f5 would be met by 60.♖b3, while the simplest answer to 59...♙f6 is 60.♖h4† ♙f5 61.♖d4, and it isn't clear whether Black has realistic winning chances. But when the envelope was opened, it turned out that Mecking had sealed a losing move.

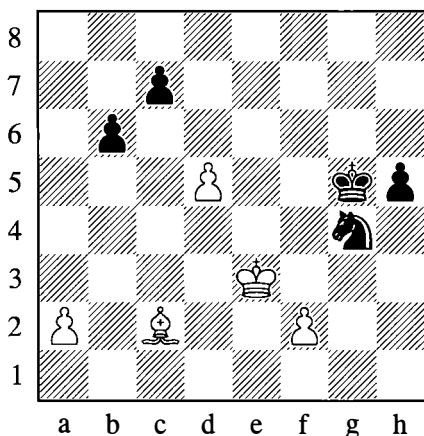
59.♖d4? ♖c4† 60.♖xc4 ♖xc4 61.♙c2 ♖e5

The g6-pawn is defended, and the black king gets to f4.

62.♙e2 ♙f4 63.h4

White can't do without this move, as otherwise Black would play ...h5-h4 and then eventually win the d-pawn by exploiting the poor position of White's king.

63...g5 64.hxg5 ♙xg5 65.♙e3 ♖g4†



This is the whole point! The white king must remain by the f-pawn.

66.♙f3 h4 67.♙d1

Mecking is hoping for 67...h3 68.♙g3 h2 69.♙f3, when White would be out of danger.

67...♖f6 68.♙b3 ♙f5 69.♙g2 ♙g4 70.♙d1† ♙f4 71.♙b3 ♖e4 72.♙c2 ♖c3

Black could have played 72...h3† 73.♙xh3

♖xf2† 74.♙g2 ♖g4 winning, but this was the last move before the time control, and I didn't want to force events.

73.♙b3 ♖e4 74.♙c2 ♖c3 75.♙b3

The best chance for White was 75.♙h3, and if 75...♖xa2 then 76.♙xh4 ♖b4 77.♙b1. However, I intended to play 75...♙g5 76.♙b3 ♖e4 77.♙g2 ♙f4.

75...♙g4 76.♙h2 ♖e4 77.♙g2 h3† 78.♙g1 ♙f3 79.♙d1† ♙f4 80.♙c2 ♖f6 81.♙b3 ♖g4 82.♙a4

White is tired of defence and wants to breathe life into his bishop.

82...h2† 83.♙g2 ♖xf2 84.♙xh2 ♖d3 85.♙g2 ♙e3 86.♙g3 ♖c1

In this position White overstepped the time limit, but his cause is hopeless. For example: 87.a3 ♖e2† 88.♙g4 ♙e4 89.♙c6 ♙e5 90.♙b7 ♖d4, followed by ...♖d4-c2-e3, and Black wins both white pawns without hindrance.

0-1

GAME 100

Tigran Petrosian – Bent Larsen

San Antonio 1972

This game was played at a stage when both opponents were out to improve their standing in the tournament. Before the start of play I was tormented by uncertainty; it was exceedingly important to guess Larsen's frame of mind. Would he be in the mood for an uncompromising struggle? This was not an idle question, and my choice of first move depended on it. You see, after 1.c4, which I often play, either 1...c5 or 1...g6 would enable Black to avoid showing his hand for the time being. After 1.d4, you can "look into your opponent's heart" much sooner.

I should also mention that over a long stretch of years my games with Larsen had had nothing but decisive results. It was only our last two encounters that had ended in draws, showing that Larsen too can be circumspect when he wants.

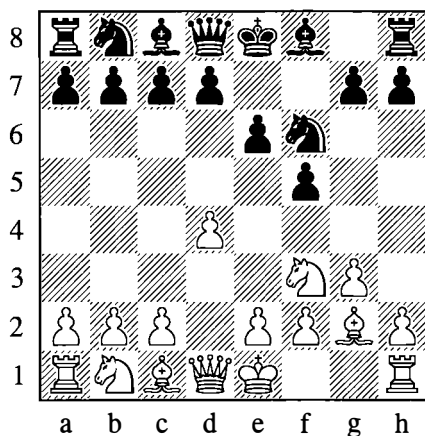
1.d4 e6

What's this? An invitation to the French? The 3.♘d2 line, even? "No," I thought. "On 2.e4 Larsen will play 2...c5, offering to go into a Sicilian or a form of Benoni. But if 2.♘f3, what then? Not a Dutch, surely? That would be fine by me!"

2.♘f3 f5

So it *is* a Dutch Defence. One of the openings which, just like most masters, I am very happy to play on the white side.

3.g3 ♘f6 4.♙g2



4...b5!?

When the Danish Grandmaster made this move, Gligoric was passing by our table. Though always self-possessed, Svetozar could barely stop himself from bursting out laughing. The move selected by Larsen does indeed look outlandish. Running ahead somewhat, I may say that the Dane's unusual continuation set me problems that I didn't entirely manage to

handle over the board. So if I did feel happy, it was not to be for all that long.

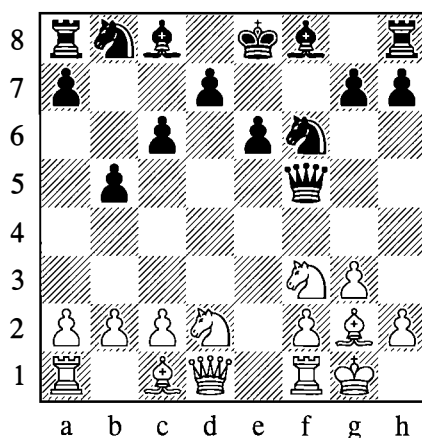
5.♘e5 c6 6.♘d2

It looks as if Black will be swiftly punished. White just needs to carry out e2-e4, and whatever Black does with his f5-pawn – whether he exchanges on e4 himself or accords the right of exchanging the f- and e-pawns to White – his position will not be a pleasant sight.

6...♖b6

Clearly Larsen is forcing some tactical play on his opponent. It emerges that carrying out e2-e4 is not so simple! On 7.c3, Black will play 7...♙b7 8.e4 c5. In that case, admittedly, after 9.dxc5 ♙xc5 10.0-0 (10.♖e2) or 9.d5, White appears to obtain a good position from his temporary or long-term pawn sacrifice. However, after quite a long think, I took a different decision.

7.e4 ♖xd4 8.♘ef3 ♖c5 9.exf5 ♖xf5 10.0-0



For the sacrificed pawn, White has a significant lead in development. If there were an object to attack in the opposing camp, he could count on extracting real gains from the undeveloped state of the black pieces. But unfortunately, no vulnerable weaknesses are

to be seen. All that is certain is that the black queen will have to run about a little; also, the situation of the rook on a8 *vis-a-vis* the bishop on g2 is not something to boost Black's confidence.

10...♖d5!

An excellent move! Here the knight plays a crucial role in the defence. At the same time, the queen's road home is cleared.

11.♖d4 ♜f7 12.♖2f3 ♜h5!

Again a good move! The queen takes steps to defend itself. Unpleasant raids with ♖e5 or ♖g5 are forestalled.

13.♞e1 ♞e7 14.♞e5 ♜f7 15.♞e2 0-0 16.♖e5 ♜h5

In the event of 16...♜e8, Black would have to reckon with 17.♖xb5. But now, after a preliminary 17.♞f3 ♜e8, the capture 18.♖xb5 would simply be met by 18...♞xf3. The queen continues to stroll around fearlessly. It was just this fearlessness, this impunity, that made me feel that White's initiative would peter out sometime; and I *was* a pawn down. At this point, fortunately, I remembered an old truth: many a player, after sacrificing pawn, perishes through playing like someone who has *lost* a pawn, not someone who has parted with it deliberately.

As long as Black has not finished his queenside development, the initiative is with White.

17.f4 ♞c5 18.♞h1 ♞b7

It was worth giving serious attention to 18...♞xd4 19.♞f3 ♜e8 20.♜xd4 ♞b7, with the aim of playing ...c6-c5 shortly, ensuring an exchange of light-squared bishops.

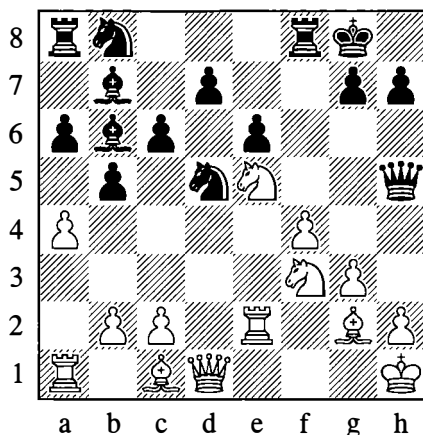
19.♖d3 ♞b6

Black has come to believe in the absolute invulnerability of his position, and counts on achieving ...c6-c5 without hurrying and

without losing any positional ground; whereas if he had parted with his dark-squared bishop a move earlier, this would surely have been a distinct concession.

20.a4 a6?

If Black's previous move was merely dubious and I didn't make so bold as to give it a question mark, this one is downright bad. Black could simply have played 20...b4, with no worries for the moment about 21.a5 ♞c7 22.a6, on account of 22...♞xa6.



21.c4!

It turns out that Black's 20...a6 has opened up a noticeable breach in his position. After 21...bxc4 22.♖xc4, the extremely unpleasant threat of 23.♜b3 rears its head.

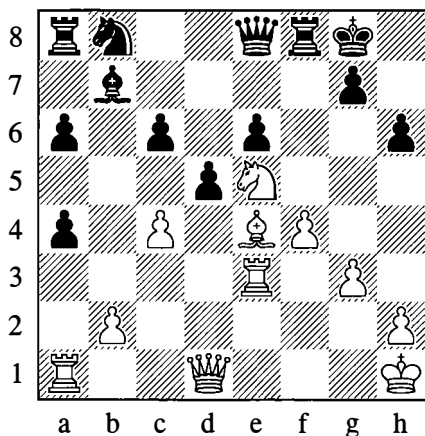
21...♖f6 22.♖g5 bxa4 23.♞f3 ♜e8 24.♞e3

At this point White had a number of good continuations, but he was already pressed for time. As often happens in this kind of situation, preference was given to a "solid" plan.

24...♞xe3 25.♞xe3 h6

At any price now, Black wants to throw back the white pieces that have been standing menacingly over him.

26.♖e4 ♖xe4 27.♞xe4 d5

**28.♙g2?**

Missing an excellent chance. Of course I considered the possibility of utilizing the b1-h7 diagonal. The arrival of the white queen at h7 is a wholly realistic prospect and would obviously be fatal to Black. But how is this to be achieved? It looks very tempting to play 28.♙b1 or 28.♙c2 (perhaps with ♙e4-g6 inserted first). I confess that I imagined Black could defend himself by 28...♘d7 with relatively little pain, but somehow it never entered my head that White doesn't have to place his queen in front of the bishop. Setting up the battery the other way round, with the bishop in front of the queen, is also strong: 28.♙g6 ♗e7 (or 28...♗d8) 29.♗c2.

About 8-10 moves earlier, when I was carefully scrutinizing some tactical chances that were not so obvious, I feel that such an oversight would not have been likely. But now that matters were in good shape all round, a genuinely good continuation was missed. I may add that I wasn't sure that the bishop should be withdrawn to the g2-square; it bothered me that in some lines the back rank would be badly protected.

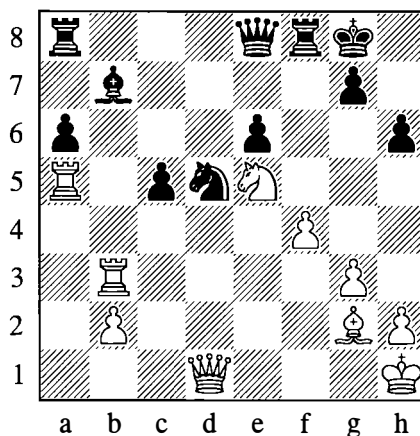
28...♘d7 29.♗xa4

The position is quietly simplifying, and after 29...♘xe5 30.♗xe5 there would be

reason to suppose that White had sufficient compensation for the pawn, but no more. In that case, the result most to be expected would be a draw. But the calm that is setting in does not suit Larsen; he creates new tension, new centres of conflict.

29...c5 30.cxd5 ♘b6 31.♗a5 ♘xd5

Black has activated his knight, and one thing that made this possible was the fact that the knight advanced to the centre with gains of tempo – by attacking the white rooks. In such a situation it pays the other side to regain the tempi by moving the attacked pieces in such a way as to create counter-attacks. The move 31.♗a5 was obvious, but now where should the other rook go?

32.♗b3**32...♗d8**

Here my opponent was unlucky. I have already said that when I retreated my bishop to g2, I couldn't help feeling that trouble on the back rank might arise. For that very reason, when playing my 30th move, I specifically took into account the tactical skirmish that now ensues.

33.♗xb7 ♘e3 34.♗e2 ♗d1† 35.♗xd1 ♘xd1 36.♗xa6

One more move, and the second white rook will land on the seventh rank – an event fraught with lethal dangers for Black.

36...♖e3

The following line also fails to save him: 36...♞d8 37.♞aa7 ♖f2† 38.♙g1 ♞d1† 39.♙f1 ♖h3† 40.♙g2, and White wins.

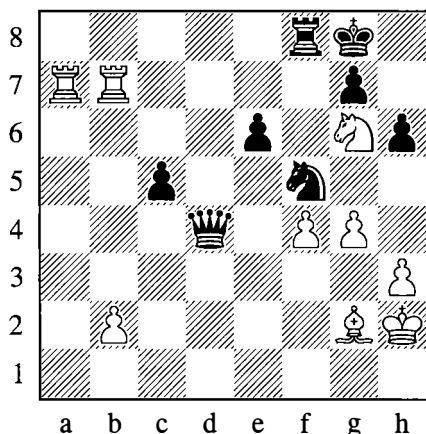
37.♞aa7 ♖f5 38.g4 ♞d8 39.h3?

There was an immediate win with 39.♙f3, but I considered I was winning (or almost winning) in a different way, and wasn't going to use up my remaining seconds looking for an alternative.

39...♞d1†

With White's flag dangling, there was much more venom in 39...♞d2, with the threat of ...♞c1†, ...♞xf4† and ...♞xe5. I had prepared the reply 40.♖f3, reckoning that after 40...♞c1†, with the time control passed, the continuation 41.♖g1 ♖g3† 42.♙h2 would at least guarantee White a draw.

40.♙h2 ♞d4 41.♖g6



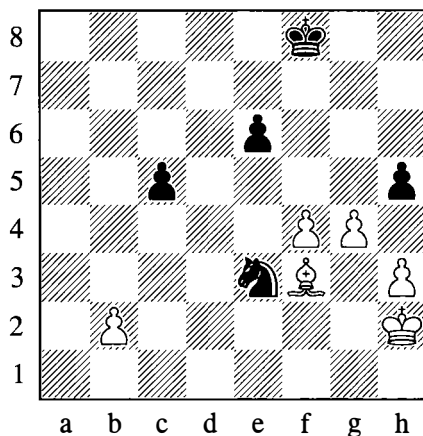
The adjourned position is not rich in possibilities for Black. The most obvious move, and the one Larsen sealed – 41...♖e3 – leads to an endgame that is hopeless for him. A better

move was 41...♞d8. Then after 42.gxf5 exf5 43.b3! (the g7-pawn won't run away, but the white b-pawn needs to be secured against the ambitions of the black rook) 43...h5! 44.♞xg7† ♞xg7 45.♞xg7 ♙xg7 46.♖e5 h4! it wouldn't be simple for White to convert his advantage into a win.

41...♖e3 42.♞xg7† ♞xg7 43.♞xg7† ♙xg7 44.♖xf8 ♙xf8 45.♙f3

Sooner or later White will set up two passed pawns on the kingside, and win. Suppose Black tries to improve his lot by exchanging the queenside pawns, for example with 45...♖c4 46.b3 ♖d2 47.♙d1 ♙e7 (not 47...c4 48.bxc4 ♖xc4 49.♙b3) 48.♙g2 c4. Then White will play 49.b4 to avoid simplification. He won't be afraid to give up his bishop for Black's passed pawn if necessary, as he will win with his own widely separated passed pawns – against which a knight is well known to be a poor defender.

45...h5!



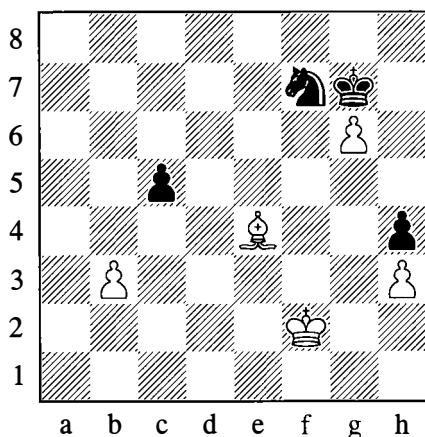
This move deserves its exclamation mark not because it is capable of altering the result of the game, which already seems predetermined. No – the move simply represents a practical chance to throw the opponent (and the position) off balance. While this game was still unfinished, I already had two adjourned

games – with Mecking and Saidy – and both positions were complex. As it somehow turned out, it was those positions – which were virtually of a middlegame character – that basically absorbed my attention. Moreover I felt that whatever type of endgame arose in my game with Larsen, I would be able to cope with it over the board. For these reasons, the move 45...h5 almost took me by surprise. Of course, the natural reaction to it is 46.♗g3, gladly assenting to an exchange of the h- and g-pawns. That exchange would free White from the constant threat of being left with a bishop and h-pawn but without the full point on the tournament chart – seeing that the queening square is the “wrong colour”. At the board, however, it seemed to me that after 46.♗g3 hxg4 47.hxg4 ♖c4 48.b3 ♖d6 49.♙e2 there would be technical difficulties ahead. And yet as Larsen afterwards showed, White could win without trouble by penetrating with his king on the h-file.

46.g5? h4! 47.♗g1 e5 48.fxex ♖c4 49.♗f2 ♖xe5

This of course is better than 49...♖xb2 50.♗e3.

50.♙e4 ♗g7 51.b3 ♖f7 52.g6



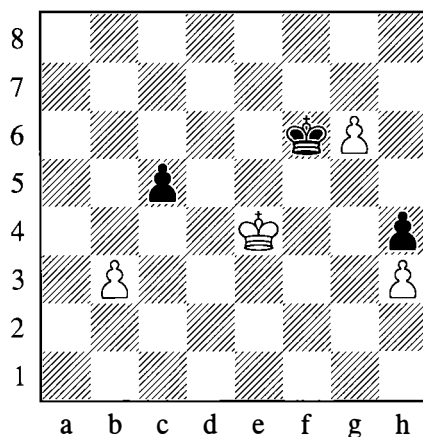
52...♖g5??

With 52...♖e5 53.♗e3 ♖xg6 54.♙xg6 ♗xg6, Black could have reached a king-and-pawn endgame in which White would sadly come to see that whichever pawn he went for – the c-pawn or the h-pawn – Black could save himself by a counter-attack on the other flank. Instead, Larsen commits a simply astounding oversight!

53.♙f5 ♗f6 54.♗e3

The bishop cannot be taken, and Black could already resign. Larsen does so after seven more moves.

54...♖e6 55.♙xe6 ♗xe6 56.♗e4 ♗f6



57.♗d5 ♗xg6 58.♗xc5 ♗f5 59.b4 ♗f4 60.b5 ♗g3 61.b6

Black resigned.

1-0

Chapter 14

1973-1974

This period, for Petrosian, was packed with contests – with active participation in the national chess programme, in international tournaments, in Candidates matches. In 1973 he played with success in the Las Palmas and Amsterdam international tournaments, where he shared 1st-2nd places with Stein and Planinc respectively. Petrosian had particular cause to remember Las Palmas, which was Stein's last tournament (on 4 July 1973 he was no more).

At Amsterdam Petrosian could have counted on a “clear” victory if it hadn't been for his loss to IM Marovic. After an unbeaten series of 73 games, this was his first defeat since losing to Huebner in the 1972 Olympiad. Petrosian told the story of the Amsterdam tournament in an article entitled “IBM and Companions”, which we reproduce in slightly abridged form.

It is thirteen years now since the “IBM” tournaments began to be reported in the chess press. These contests soon became most impressive, and, as a supplement to the main event, the organizers introduced a special companion tournament for players not yet possessing the Grandmaster title. In this they were following the good practice of several other major international tournaments. The winner of the companion or “master” event gains the right to cross swords with the chess celebrities in the premier tournament the following year. The organizers of master tournaments don't have their hands tied by the need to recruit high-ranking players who lend the contest the required prestige and the right Grandmaster norm, etc. etc.; and it is just these companion events that enable the chess public to examine the play of some young, or not so young, masters (sometimes including female players, who also receive invitations). And so this year everyone had the chance to get to know such relatively little-known players as Oleg Romanishin, Robert Bellin (England) and A. van den Berg (Netherlands).

But the driving force of the “IBM 1973” festival was, as you would expect, the premier tournament.

The organizers had succeeded in assembling quite a strong line-up of contestants, including some individuals whose recent performances gave rise to a number of questions, sometimes perplexed ones.

How would Boris Spassky play this time?

How was the “rebirth” of Laszlo Szabo, the veteran of Hungarian chess, to be explained? For a good ten years, this experienced Grandmaster had not been showing the play and the results worthy of his reputation as one of the world's strongest chessplayers who had three times participated in Candidates Tournaments. You could have supposed that one of the most colourful figures from 1950s chess had been put out of action by the merciless march of time. Then all of a sudden – victory in the 1972 Sarajevo tournament (ahead of Hort, Keres and Petrosian);

and shortly before the IBM event, a share of first place with Geller at the AVRO tournament in Hilversum (ahead of Ivkov, Ljubojevic and Polugaevsky).

Since his great success in the Vidmar Memorial (four years ago), Albin Planinc, the Grandmaster from Ljubljana, had not been shining in competitions and had only quite rarely taken part in them at all. And yet only very recently Gligoric wrote that he himself had “in many cases witnessed how English and Dutch organizers wanted to get Planinc into their tournaments.” Gligoric continued: “They even prefer Planinc to many others with higher Elo ratings, for a simple reason – he is so interesting as a player. Just think – in the seventies of our century, when the system of international chess information is so terribly advanced, there is a young man who throws *Chess Informant* aside and turns to the old books, feeling it to be his sacred duty to play differently from the rest.”

In Amsterdam there was a period when it seemed that the tournament would be an outright triumph for Planinc. After 9 rounds, having scored 7½ points, he was the sole leader, a full 2 points ahead of the lazily dawdling pack. But by suffering two losses towards the end – against the author of these lines in round 11, and then against Quinteros two rounds later – he let his advantage slip.

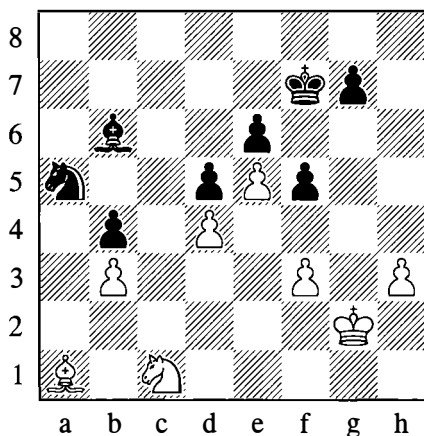
After the end of the tournament, Spassky expressed the opinion that Planinc’s play had been much more scintillating than that of the other participants. A flattering appraisal of the young Grandmaster’s games – and yet it is hard to find an example to support this characterization. What was distinctive, in my view, was Planinc’s attitude to his task as a competitor. The number of times you could see him away from his board could literally be counted. All through every evening, or more exactly every afternoon (we played to a somewhat eccentric schedule, from one o’clock until six), he would be fixed to his chair, putting as much of his strength and skill as he could into every game. And here is a curious fact. Going through Planinc’s games in this tournament, we do not discover his usual efforts to get away from well-worn contemporary opening schemes and middlegame precepts. There was no King’s Gambit in his repertoire, and in the early phase of the game he would leave his g-pawn alone. In short – normal openings, normal play with only an intermittent colouring of half-forgotten variations, for instance in his game with Andersson where he threw his queen out to g4 on the 4th move of a French Defence. Just two rounds later, when Timman, who doesn’t usually play the French, adopted this very opening after what we may presume was substantial preparation at home, Planinc took the game into a theoretical main line, demonstrating very thorough knowledge of it.

The winner of “IBM 1973” is unquestionably a highly talented player possessing exceptional practical strength. If he devotes serious attention to the questions of positional structure, then I think a regular run of successes awaits him. Frequent recurrences of the malady known as disdain for the fundamental principles of chess will lead to no good, and will be exploited by the experienced strategists who always rub their hands in anticipation of an encounter with Planinc.

It is hard to say anything good about my own play. As happens with me now and again, in this tournament I handled more than one game poorly, and whether winning or signing my name under “draw” on the scoresheet, I felt wholly dissatisfied. Naturally then, I didn’t succeed in displaying anything that could count as a chess revelation. The only exception, perhaps, was rather an amusing variation discovered while analysing an adjourned game.

Kick Langeweg – Tigran Petrosian

Amsterdam 1973



The two hours separating the end of the round from the resumption of unfinished games flew by fairly fast, but I still had time for some lamenting over my last move played before the adjournment:

40...♔g6

The point is that while play was still in progress I had more or less clearly seen the arrangement of forces that leads to a win (pawns on g5 and f4, knight on f5 and king on h4, after which White will inevitably succumb to zugzwang). With my flag on the “brink”, it seemed to me to make no difference whether I advanced my king on the h-file before moving the pawns or carried out the planned manoeuvre the other way round.

Analysis convinced me that if White had sealed 41.h4!, the win would be difficult. For example: 41...♔h5 42.♔h3 ♔d8 43.♖d3 ♖xb3 44.♖f4+ ♔h6 45.♔b2 ♔xh4 46.♖xe6 ♔e1 47.♖c7 ♔c3 48.e6!, and it is White who wins. I did not in fact find a plan that would have substantially improved my position after 41.h4.

It remained to console myself with the thought that such a move could only be sealed

either by a very strong player or else by a weak one who didn’t foresee that the pawn would be lost within a couple of moves. My opponent, the experienced master Kick Langeweg, was likely to have settled for some ordinary move, most probably 41.♔g3. In that case I *would* be able to continue with 41...♔h5 42.h4 (hindering the plan to place the pawns on g5 and f4) 42...♔d8 43.♖d3 ♔xh4+ 44.♔h3 ♖xb3 45.♖f4+ ♔h6 46.♔b2 ♔e1 47.♖xe6 ♔c3 48.♖c7, and now of course not 48...♔xb2 on account of 49.e6!, but: 48...♖xd4 49.e6 ♖xe6! 50.♔c1+ ♖g5+ 51.♔h4, and here rather surprisingly Black has a mate with 51...♔e1#!

When the game was resumed, it turned out that Langeweg had sealed a different “ordinary” move:

41.♔b2

And now the game concluded as follows:

41...♔g5 42.♔g3 f4+ 43.♔g2 ♔h4 44.♔h2 g5 45.♔g2 ♔h5 46.♔h2 ♖c6 47.♖e2 ♖e7 48.♔g2 ♖f5 49.♔h2 ♔h4 50.♔g2 ♖e3+ 51.♔h2 ♖c2

White resigned.

0–1

It is difficult to give an evaluation of Spassky’s performance. He put a lot of effort into some of his games, but sometimes all of a sudden you would notice that his warlike ardour was gone. I can also testify that after the end of the tournament he stated publicly that he was dissatisfied with his result.

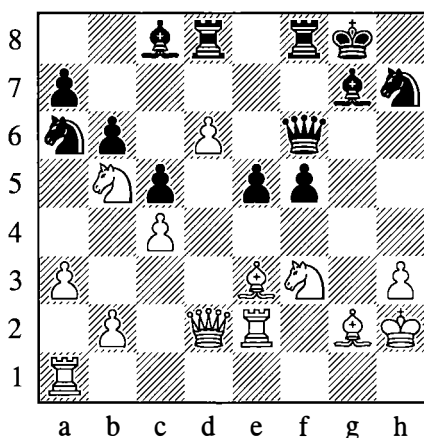
If Szabo’s result cannot be hailed as remarkable against the background of his recent successes, the sixth place achieved by Drazen Marovic, editor of the magazine *Sahovski glasnik*, deserves every recognition.

I cannot help showing you how the author of these lines was punished for some strategic casualness. The game was played in the 8th round, just at that stage of the tournament

when Planinc, winning game after game, was striving to open up a lead. It was natural that I wanted at least to “hang on to his tail”, whatever the cost. On that unlucky day it already became clear soon after the opening that Timman was not going to hold out against Planinc. In my own game, after 27 moves, quite a sharp position arose.

Drazen Marovic – Tigran Petrosian

Amsterdam 1973



At this stage, as I recall, I was almost satisfied with the way things were going. In particular, my opponent had very little time left. I won't say how much, though I think there were about two minutes, possibly three, remaining on White's clock.

While on the subject, I feel bound to point out that the moment has perhaps come for FIDE to review the quality of the chess equipment with which major contests are held. This applies in particular to the clocks. Seeing that the designers and manufacturers of chess clocks follow their own separate guidelines in producing these objects of such importance on the chess scene, some kind of standard ought to be established to free the contestants from the need to readjust to new equipment time after time. Somehow, complaints about chess

clocks have been heard extremely often of late.

But let us return to the game:

28. ♖f2 e4 29. ♙h4 ♖g6

29... ♖h6 was probably better.

30. ♘g5 ♜f6 31. ♖g1!

White brings up his last reserves to the sector where the crisis is imminent.

31... ♜h8 32. ♖e1 ♜h5?

Banking on a “fearsome” check from e5.

33. ♜xe4!

An excellent stroke. My forces are badly placed, and White sacrifices a piece to expose the tactical weaknesses of the black formation. I recall that at that moment I put the knight sacrifice down to time-trouble desperation, but after the following sequence I was amazed by how badly things stood for me:

33... ♗xe4 34. ♙xe4 ♖e6 35. ♖e3

The game ended like this:

35... ♖de8 36. ♙e7 ♜f5 37. ♙xf5 ♖xf5 38. ♖g5 ♖f7 39. ♖h4!

And now I could already have resigned, but I did what is usual in such circumstances – I took a good look at my opponent's flag, saw to my annoyance that it had let me down, played two more moves, and only then accepted a zero on the tournament chart.

...1–0

I would particularly like to discuss the play of Timman, Ribli and Andersson. The Swede Andersson, the Dutchman Timman and the Hungarian Ribli are among the leading young players who will undoubtedly put pressure on the older generation in the next few years. And whenever I come together with them, there is something I would like to know. When we give up our place in the chess sun to the young

talents, will it be because our play has changed for the worse on account of our age? Or will those who begin to surpass us be chessplayers who have risen to a new, higher level of mastery?

Ulf Andersson: small and slight, in outward appearance he seems more like a child who has strayed into the hall looking for a simultaneous display than a fully-fledged competitor in the main tournament. I somehow feel sorry for him. He crazily trails from tournament to tournament, and the easy opportunity to lead the life of a modern chess professional (who fortunately is not overburdened with worries about every crust of bread, unlike the professional of the not too distant past) has already left a grave imprint on his manner of play and his tournament psychology. In his games you rarely, very rarely see him aspiring to a full-blooded struggle. "Safety first" is not a motto before which chessplayers in such young years ought to bow. It leads to nothing good. And yet Andersson is capable of simply playing well. He possesses positional understanding, a keen eye for tactics, and vast theoretical knowledge to go with a well-worn tournament repertoire. In a word, all the signs of a top-class player are present. And at the same time – there are all the signs of creative stagnation.

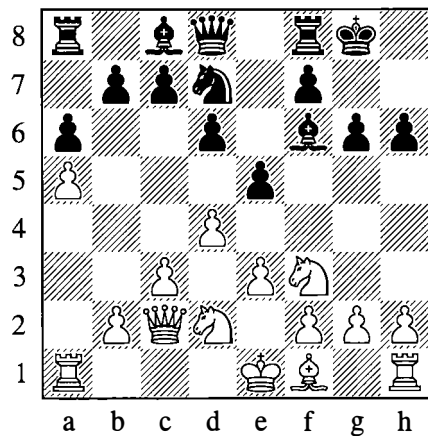
The play of the young Hungarian Zoltan Ribli arouses conflicting feelings. After going through a solid course of chess education, he appeared in the international chess arena at quite an early age. Today he is an experienced and frequent competitor in international tournaments. His opening repertoire is fairly original, ranging from conventional systems in the English Opening to the sharpest of forced variations in the Sicilian Defence. But from examining his games I have not been able to make out where his heart lies – in chess adventures, or in positional manoeuvring? I readily admit that Ribli is still at a chess crossroads, seeking his style. If that is so, it is a very good thing, because it is only by

independently seeking his way that a talented young player can be launched into the orbit of high-level chess.

But there is one "but" with his play, and it is a big and disturbing one – namely the speed with which he takes crucial decisions. In his game with me, there was an instance of this.

Tigran Petrosian – Zoltan Ribli

Amsterdam 1973



In this position there followed:

11. ♖c4 ♜h8 12. h4 h5 13. ♜e4 ♜g7 14. ♜eg5

It was only here that Ribli permitted himself to catch his breath. His last three moves, every one of which deserves a question mark, were played in a manner characteristic of blitz chess. I must admittedly give him his due – at this point and on the next move, he found the only possibility for continuing the game:

14... ♜e7 15. ♜b3 e4! 16. ♜d2 ♜h6! 17. ♜xf7† ♜g7 18. ♜xh6 ♜xh6 19. ♜f1 ♜f6 20. f3 exf3 21. gxf3 ♜g4 22. fxg4 ♜xg4 23. ♜e2 ♜xf1† 24. ♜xf1 ♜xe3 25. ♜c2 ♜e8 26. ♜f2 ♜g3 27. ♜d2† ♜g7 28. ♜f4 ♜xe2† 29. ♜f1

½-½

So the facts show that Ribli suffers from a malady characteristic of many talented young chessplayers, who are convinced (who *did* convince them?) that they are capable of grasping the essence of a position at lightning speed and finding the correct move just as quickly. At the present time, superficiality is Ribli's main weakness.

The Dutch set high hopes on Jan Timman. A young but already experienced professional, the impression he makes on the uninitiated can be that of a youth whose life as a chessplayer rests purely on his outstanding talent. This is not so. Timman works at his chess systematically, and as a result his analyses have contributed to numerous topical variations of contemporary theory.

Our own young master Oleg Romanishin, who came second in the "companion" tournament, can be placed in the same age group. I think he would have cut no worse a figure in the premier tournament than any other master who played in it. My feeling was that Romanishin doesn't have quite enough confidence in his own powers. But a more precise impression of the merits or weaknesses of his play can only be gained after he encounters truly strong and experienced opponents.

Jan Smejkal and Ivan Radulov, who had both participated in the Leningrad Interzonal, may be counted among the IBM tournament's under-achievers. The play of the former showed obvious signs of fatigue, which led to blunders. Although Radulov didn't commit any gross oversights, he failed to display that dynamic force in his games which is necessary for success.

* * *

But the main events were taking place in the chess life of our own country. Boris Spassky's loss of the World Championship title had

aroused concern within the USSR Chess Federation. The existing structure of the national championship was clearly out of keeping with the increase in the number of high-ranking players, especially among the talented youth, with Anatoly Karpov as their leader. The system of elimination through semi-finals, in which the country's leading Grandmasters were forced to play for qualification alongside players who were clearly a class lower, was by now in patent contradiction with reality.

As from 1973, the Championships of the country were organized on a new three-tier structure for qualification, comprising a Top League, a First League and the all-union elimination tournaments. In the Top League of the 41st USSR Championship, the complete "guards regiment" of Soviet chess took part, including four ex-World Champions and the contestants in the Candidates Final match, Karpov and Korchnoi. The tournament proceeded under Spassky's banner; the potential that he had built up before his match with Fischer had still not been spent, and he won the Championship convincingly. Petrosian finished in the group of Grandmasters that shared 2nd-6th places; it included the Candidates finalists Karpov and Korchnoi, as well as Kuzmin and Polugaevsky.

In an article by Paul Keres entitled "A Clash of Styles", the restrained style of Tigran Petrosian was described in contrast to the impulsive Mikhail Tal on the basis of their duel in the 41st Championship. The article was published in the American magazine *Chess Life*, and in 1987 it was printed in the *USSR Central Chess Club Bulletin* (No.15). The opinion of a player who constantly rivalled Mikhail Botvinnik in the forties and fifties of the last century is not without its interest to later generations of chessplayers.

"It is difficult to find two leading Grandmasters with such different styles of play; Tal and Petrosian approach the game

from diametrically opposed standpoints. Tal loves to attack. Petrosian prefers defending. Tal loves any complications with combinations and sacrifices, while Petrosian feels more comfortable in relatively quiet positions, especially those where the strategic plans are clear. Tal is always prepared for any risk, whereas the number one rule for Petrosian is the security of his own position.

“Taking all this into account, games between these two players promise to be most interesting. We expect to see Tal attacking with great force and Petrosian coolly defending himself; and we wait for an answer as to which will prevail – attack or defence. In the majority of cases we do indeed see games on these lines, but not always. We know of many games in which Petrosian has torn his opponent to pieces with a powerful attack like a true tiger, and fine examples of Tal’s defence triumphing. Grandmasters in this class are strong in any position, although naturally they prefer to be in their own element. Everything that has just been said was reflected in the game between Tal and Petrosian in the 1973 national Championship.”

GAME 101

Mikhail Tal – Tigran Petrosian

Moscow 1973

Notes by Keres

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♘d7
5.♙c4 ♘gf6 6.♘g5 e6 7.♚e2 ♘b6 8.♙b3 a5
9.a4

A new move, which can hardly be preferred to the old 9.a3. The continuation 9...♚xd4? 10.♘1f3 ♙b4† 11.c3 ♙xc3† 12.♙f1 ♚b4 13.♚d1 is not a justification for White’s experiment. His queenside position, should he castle long, has been seriously weakened.

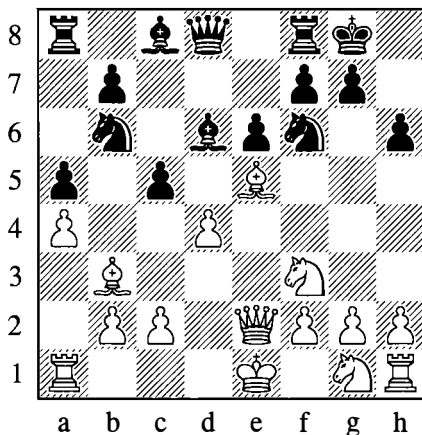
9...h6 10.♘5f3 c5

After some essential prophylaxis Black starts the counter-attack in the centre which usually secures him a satisfactory game. The most reasonable plan for White now would be 11.dxc5 ♙xc5 followed by 12.♘e5, 13.♘1f3 and 14.0–0, but Tal has quite other ideas.

11.♙f4 ♙d6

Petrosian is not a player to go in for dubious sacrifices. Tal probably examined the following possibility for Black: 11...♘fd5 12.♙e5 c4!? 13.♙xc4 ♙b4† 14.♙f1 ♘xc4 15.♚xc4 b6, with active play for the pawn.

12.♙e5 0–0



13.0–0–0

Tal must be “crazy” – such was the initial reaction of his Grandmaster colleagues, and of the public too. And indeed, there are weighty enough reasons for saying that queenside castling looks like a decision for suicide. Objectively speaking, this move cannot be justified.

And yet there is a reverse side to the coin, which makes Tal’s decision comprehensible. This game was played at the end of the tournament, when he was in desperate need of points. The continuation he chooses

creates a position where continued quiet play is impossible – there will soon be ferocious mutual attacks on opposite wings. This is just what Tal loves, and he was probably hoping to outplay Petrosian in such a situation. To obtain the desired position, however, White has used up too many tempi. In the ensuing race, Black is in front.

The solid continuation 13.dxc5 ♖xc5 14.♖h3, with 15.0–0 to follow – or alternatively 13.♞d1 – would have offered White a wealth of middlegame possibilities.

13...c4!

A very strong retort, eliminating the pawn on a4 and clearing the way for Black's own a-pawn. Black is already starting an attack against the white king, while White still has to finish his kingside development.

14.♙xc4 ♖xa4 15.♖h3 ♖b6

Now White finally proceeds to active operations. The crisis is approaching. The white g-pawn and the black a-pawn will shatter the respective enemy king positions, and the only question is who will get there first. But Black is ahead by a very important tempo.

16.g4 a4

Black could have met the impending danger (17.g5) by playing 16...♖xc4 17.♞xc4 b5. But instead he prefers the attacking pawn race, hoping to benefit from his extra tempo.

17.g5 ♖hxg5

It's hard to say whether 18.♖fxg5 would have been better, but after 18...a3 19.b3 ♖b4 (19...♖bd5) we can see that there is no reason for such an assertion. The open diagonal for the queen signifies nothing, and the knight on h3 looks no better than on f3.

18...a3!

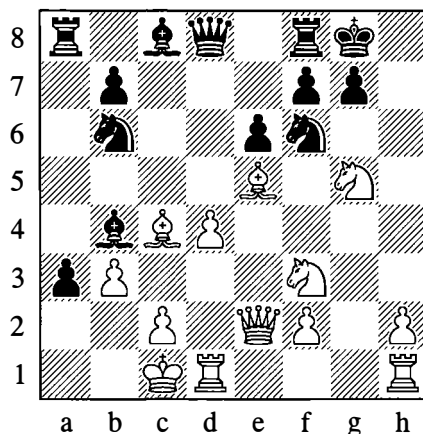
An unpleasant move for White to face. The chief threat, 19...axb2† 20.♙xb2 ♖a4† or

20...♖a3†, is very hard to resist. Tal therefore decides to leave the enemy pawn on a3, but this creates great dangers for his king. The struggle has reached its climax.

19.b3 ♖b4!

At this point, in my view, Petrosian missed the best continuation which is 19...♖bd5. With that move Black not only threatens to play 20...♖c3 or 20...♖b4, he also opens the very important d8–a5 diagonal for his queen.

White's best answer to 19...♖bd5 is 20.♞d3, which gives good chances of holding the position. The point is that after 20...a2 21.♙b2 Black cannot play 21...♞a5 because his bishop is "hanging", while on 21...♖b4 White escapes from trouble thanks to 22.♙xf6 ♖xf6 23.c3. The best chance for Black lies in 20...♖b4!, forcing 21.♞d2. He can then continue with 21...b5! (21...♖fd5 also deserves consideration) 22.♙xb5 ♖fd5 (or 22...♖a6), with excellent attacking possibilities.

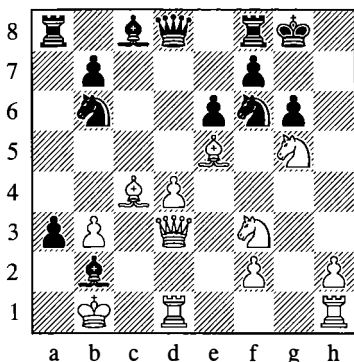


20.♞d3?

This loses at once. The interesting thing to note is that Tal was only examining possibilities for attack, in a position where he had to think about the safety of his own king. Tal's idea behind this move is fantastic: 20...♖c3 21.♞d3 a2 22.♙d1 a1=♞† 23.♙e2,

with wild complications. But even here Black has sufficient defensive resources: 23...♖bd5, and now 24.♙xd5 exd5 25.♙xf6 ♜e8†, or 24.♜h7 ♜f4† 25.♙xf4 ♜xh7, and the attack is repulsed.

Yet it would not all have been so bad for Tal if he had first given his king an outlet with 20.c3!. Then 20...♙xc3 21.♞d3!, with the twofold threat of 22.♙xf6 and 22.♞xc3, would practically force Black to play 21...♙b2†. After 22.♙b1 White's king is not in a mating net, and he can renew his own attack. There is a deadly threat of 23.♙xf6. I don't see anything better for Black than 22...g6.



White has a choice of attacking plans, of which the following are worth mentioning:

- (a) 23.♜xe6? ♞e7! —+
- (b) 23.♙xe6 ♙xe6 24.♜xe6 ♞e7 25.♜xf8 ♜xf8 26.♜g5, with unclear play.
- (c) 23.♞hg1 ♜xc4 24.bxc4 ♞b6! 25.♙a2 ♙c1! 26.♞b3 ♞xb3† 27.♜xb3 ♙xg5 28.♜xg5, and an ending arises with approximately equal chances.

As we see, in this very complicated position the fate of the game literally hangs by a thread. White may have some better options, for instance 23.♜d2, clearing a path for the queen and threatening 24.♞h3. But what is perfectly clear is that at move 20 White should have preferred 20.c3!, which would have led to interesting and exceedingly complex play with a wholly unpredictable result.

20...a2!

Tal should have foreseen this strong continuation.

21.♙b2 ♜xc4† 22.♞xc4 ♜d5!

With a few powerful moves Petrosian completely refutes White's attacking tries and achieves an easily won position.

23.♜e4

The refutation of 23.♜xe6 is 23...a1=♞†, while after 23.♙xg7 the simplifications are in Black's favour: 23...♙c3† 24.♞xc3 ♜xc3 25.♜xe6 a1=♞†. The game is now over.

23...f6 24.♙f4 ♙a3† 25.♙a1 ♜xf4 26.h4 ♜f7 27.♞g4 ♞a5

White resigned.

0–1

In 1974, in the next World Championship Candidates cycle, Petrosian's opponent in the quarter-finals was Lajos Portisch, one of the strongest players in the world at that time. This was a difficult adversary for Petrosian. He had never yet succeeded in beating Portisch, on whom he was four games "down". But at Palma de Mallorca, where the match took place, he did manage to solve the problem of his jinx opponent. After winning the 5th and 9th games he was two ahead, and although Portisch succeeded in levelling the score, Petrosian extracted a victory from game 13 and won the match by 7 points to 6 (in the quarter-finals, victory in the match went to the first player to win 3 games).

In the semi-final Petrosian had to play Korchnoi, with whom his relations had become difficult. Their match in Odessa featured an uncompromising struggle and ended in victory for Korchnoi: +3 –1 =1.

"As it turned out, my ally in the match with Petrosian was Portisch" Korchnoi stated, when

commenting on the match for *Komsomolskaia pravda*. “Victory over the Hungarian Grandmaster in their quarter-final duel had cost the ex-World Champion so much in terms of energy and nerves that the following interval of a month and a half proved to be too short. Of course I didn’t expect our match to be over so quickly. But when Petrosian blundered and allowed a mate on the move in the first game, I realized my opponent was exhausted.” We may add that the early conclusion to the match was influenced by the deterioration of Petrosian’s health (an acute attack of a kidney complaint).

GAME 102

Tigran Petrosian – Lajos Portisch

Palma de Mallorca (13) 1974

Notes by I. Zaitsev

1.♠f3 d5 2.d4 e6 3.c4 ♘f6 4.♗g5

This move order has the aim of limiting Black’s choices, in particular avoiding the variation 4.♘c3 c5.

4...♗e7 5.♘c3 0–0 6.♖c1

Now Portisch started thinking. Petrosian explained this chiefly by the fact that the Hungarian Grandmaster likes to play this way against the Tartakower Variation himself.

More often, 6.e3 is played.

6...h6 7.♗h4 b6 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♘xd5 exd5 10.♗xe7 ♗xe7 11.g3

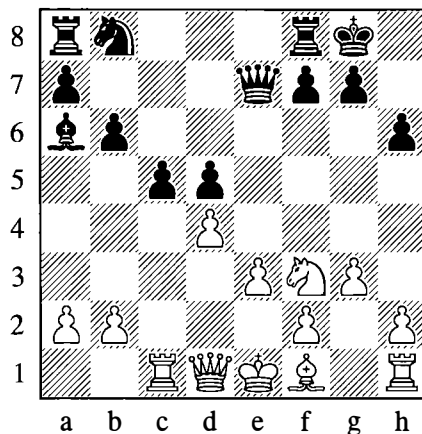
It was with this continuation in mind that White played 6.♖c1.

11...♗a6

In a game Uhlmann – Veresov, Schwedt 1969, Black cast doubt on White’s opening plan after 11...♖e8 12.♗g2 ♗a6 13.♘e5 ♘d7 14.♖xc7 ♖ac8 (15.♖xd7? is bad on account of

15...♗b4† 16.♙f1 ♗xd4! 17.♘d3 ♖xe2!! – Petrosian).

12.e3 c5



13.♗xa6

After 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.♗xd5 ♗b7 15.♗d1 ♗f6 16.♗g2 ♖d8, Black stands better. In this line, 15.♗h5 (instead of 15.♗d1) also hands Black the initiative after 15...♗e4 and 16...♗b4†!; an improvement is 15.♗f5, but even so, 15...♗e6! 16.♗f4 ♗xa2 17.♗g2 ♗a5† can hardly be to White’s liking.

The subsequent development of theory in this variation concentrated on 13.dxc5 bxc5 14.♗xa6 ♘xa6 15.♗xd5. For example in Korchnoi – Karpov, Merano (5) 1981, the continuation was 15...♘b4 16.♗c4 ♗f6 17.♘h4 ♗xb2 18.0–0 ♗xa2 19.♗xa2 ♘xa2 20.♖xc5 ♖fc8 21.♖a5 ♘c1!, and Black held the ending.

Instead of 17.♘h4, Kasparov considers 17.♗e2! ♖fc8 18.a3 to be better – but here too, according to his analysis, Black regains the pawn with 18...♗xb2 19.♗xb2 ♘d3† 20.♙e2 ♘xb2, and holds the draw after 21.♖c2 ♘a4 22.♖hcl ♖c6 23.♘e5 ♖a6.

13...♘xa6 14.0–0 ♘c7

It looks more natural to play 14...c4, but Portisch was troubled by 15.b3 in reply.

15.b3 ♖ac8 16.♞e1

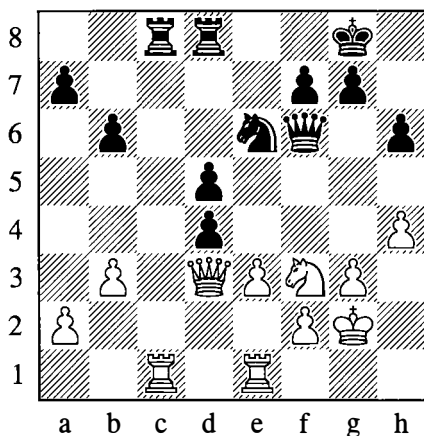
In friendly conversation at the close of the match, Portisch confessed that after this move he started to feel uneasy: "I reckoned that Petrosian was aiming for ♞e2-c2."

16...♞fd8 17.h4

Forestalling the manoeuvre ...♞e6-g5 which might later have been possible.

17...♞e6

During the game Petrosian thought that after 17...♞e8! and then 18...♞f6, Black would even stand slightly better. And incidentally he was quite right. However, the Hungarian Grandmaster now starts playing rather unsightly (his distaste for this kind of structure was evidently having its effect).

18.♞d3 ♞f6 19.♔g2 cxd4

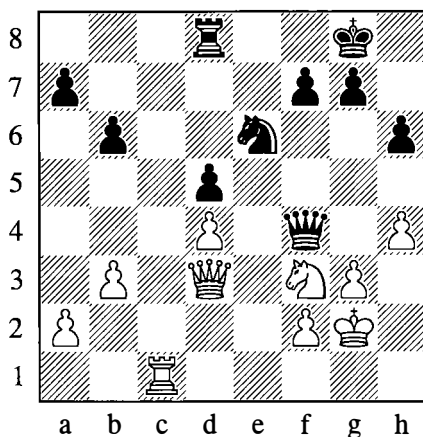
As Petrosian said after the game: "I noticed how my opponent raised his hand to make this move – an indifferent one, on the whole – but then he had another think. I confess I got agitated and walked away from the table. Sensing my agitation, Portisch grew wary and immersed himself in his thoughts, but eventually he decided on this exchange all the same."

20.exd4

Here White could gain a slight edge by 20.♞xc8 ♞xc8 21.exd4 followed by an invasion with ♞e5 or ♞a6, but Petrosian is now trying for more.

20...♞xc1 21.♞xc1 ♞f4

Black is out to seize the c-file and supposes that this tactical thrust (which was not at all a surprise to White) will serve him well. The simple 21...♞e8 was more natural.

**22.gxf4!**

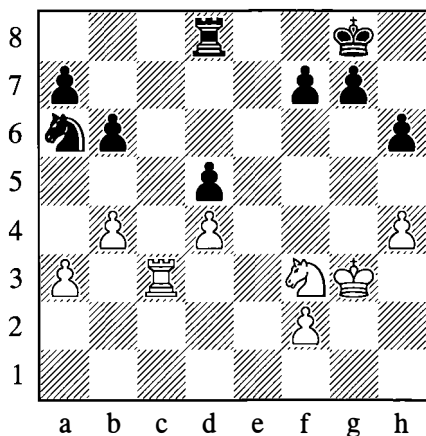
Black was threatening 22...♞e4, or (in answer to 22.♞e1) 22...♞g4. After 22.♞e3, the chances would be equal.

22...♞xf4† 23.♔g3 ♞xd3 24.♞c3 ♞b4

It is hard to blame Black for this move, especially as he could have held the position later on. But 24...♞b2! 25.♞c2 ♞d3 (not 25...♞d1? 26.♞d2) 26.♞c3 ♞b2 would have brought about a draw.

[Ed. note: Kasparov disagrees with this verdict. In place of 25.♞c2, he holds 25.h5! to be better, and gives this variation in support: 25...♞e8 26.♞e5 f6 27.♞g6 ♞e4 28.♞c8† ♞f7 29.♞c7† ♞e6 30.♞xg7 ♞xd4 31.♞xa7, and having recovered his pawn, White retains the initiative.]

25.a3 ♞a6 26.b4!

**26...dxb8?**

Black's attempt to transfer his knight to the centre lands him in a total positional bind. Good alternatives were 26...d7 27.♞c8† (27.b5 ♞c7? 28.♞e3! costs Black a piece, but 27...d7 28.d5 ♞e7 29.d6 ♞e1 promises White nothing) 27...c7 28.d5 ♞e7 29.d6 ♞e1 promises White nothing) 27...c7 28.b5 d7 29.d5 ♞e7 30.d6 d7 31.dxa7 d8!, and 26...c7 27.b5 d7 28.♞c7 d7! 29.♞c8 ♞b7. In either case Black would have good chances of equalizing.

27.♞c7 a5

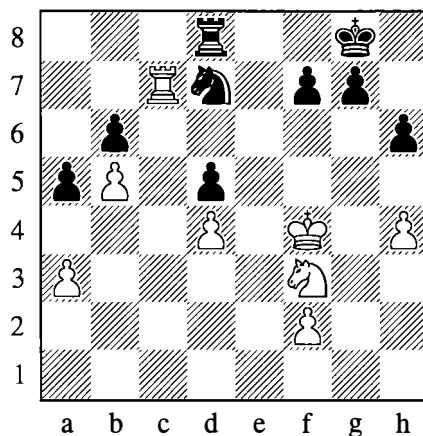
Portisch tries to bring about some more exchanges. The weak 27...a6 28.d5 f6 29.dg6 could lead Black to disaster after either 29...c7 30.h5 d7 31.♞xd7 or 29...d7 30.d7† and 31.d6.

28.b5!

The only way! Another good line might seem to be 28.bxa5 bxa5 29.d5 f6 30.dg6, but with 30...d6! 31.♞a7 d8 Black would manage to obtain counterplay.

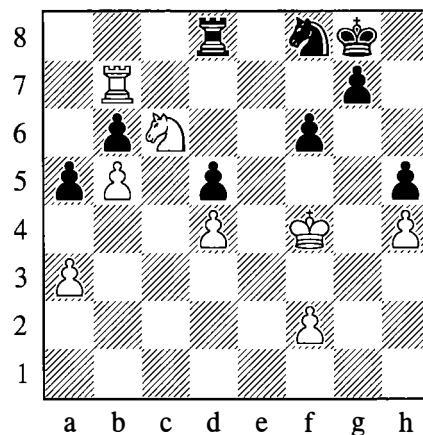
28...d7 29.c4!

All White's pieces are participating in the game.

**29...h5**

A more precise choice was probably 29...d8 30.♞b7 d6 31.d5 dg6† 32.dxc6 ♞xc6 33.c5, although even then Black has no easy game. Another possible plan for White (after 29...d8) is 30.♞c6 ♞b8 31.c5 d8 32.h5.

[Ed. note: In this last line, instead of 30...♞b8, Kasparov considers 30...dg6† 31.c4 ♞b8 to be an improvement for Black, but here too, after 32.d6 f6 33.h5! d7 34.dh4 c7 35.d5 ♞b7 36.a4!, he ends up in a total bind. For example: 36...g6 (there appears to be nothing better) 37.dg3 gch5† 38.dhx5 dg8 39.f4! c7 40.♞c6 c7 41.f5 c7 42.d4, picking up the d5-pawn and getting to the b6-pawn.]

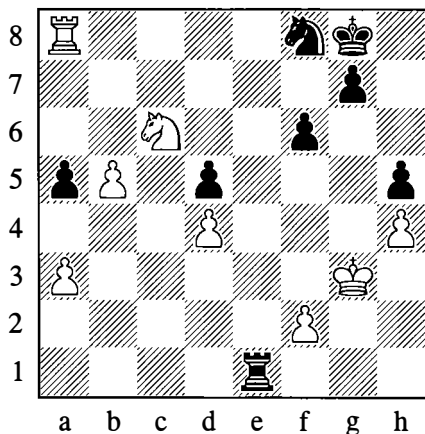
30.d5 d8 31.♞b7 f6 32.d6

Black's position is hopeless.

32...♘g6† 33.♔g3 ♖d6

An immediate 33...♖e8 looks better.

34.♖xb6 ♖e6 35.♖b8† ♘f8 36.♖a8 ♖e1



37.♘d8

Another way to win was 37.b6 ♖b1 38.♘b4 axb4 39.a4 b3 40.b7 b2 41.♖xf8† ♔h7 42.♖h8† ♔g6 43.b8=♚ ♖g1† 44.♔f3 b1=♚ 45.♚e8† with mate in 3 more moves.

37...♔h7 38.b6 ♖b1 39.b7 ♘d7 40.♖xa5

Black resigned.

1-0

Applause broke out, and everyone rushed to congratulate Petrosian. This time, the joint post-mortem was conducted a shade faster than usual. Portisch congratulated his opponent, and the ex-World Champion tried to console Portisch as far as he could. Chatting with each other, the two Grandmasters were like a couple of old friends meeting at a crossroads – the crossroads where tournament chess destiny had brought these two eminent players together. Now their ways parted.

Chapter 15

1975-1978

The closer a World Championship match comes, the more the interest in chess grows. In January 1975, with a Fischer – Karpov match in the offing, the editors of the journal *Literaturnaiia gazeta* organized a form of “round table” discussion, to find out the opinions of six former World Champions on the problems of the current chess scene. Here is how Petrosian answered their questions.

“How would you rate the overall quality of play in the cycle of World Championship Candidates events that has just finished?”

“I’ve taken part in the Candidates events several times. I’ve also played matches for the World Championship. The pundits and participants usually state the opinion that competitions at the top level don’t live up to people’s hopes from the creative standpoint. I think you can make this comparison: in studying and working to improve his chess, a player is accumulating capital, so to speak – and when it comes to World Championship contests, he merely uses that capital up. There’s nothing surprising in this. Everything is subordinated to one aim – that of achieving victory.

“What do you think of the prospects for the coming World Championship match?”

“Of course it will be difficult for Karpov. Fischer has been through a very extensive course of chess schooling. Today he figures in the role of ‘genius’, but *we* remember a time when he wasn’t above coming to Moscow to learn something from the Soviet masters. And Soviet Grandmasters have more than once given him a merciless beating. There was a time when he was beaten in the Interzonal, in the Candidates contests, in ordinary international tournaments. That is a great education. Unfortunately Karpov hasn’t yet been through such a school. Up to now, his rise has been uncommonly smooth...

“So Karpov isn’t as battle-hardened as Fischer. In his 23 years Karpov simply hasn’t had time to encounter a large number of positions in practice. But all this is pure speculation. It’s hard to say what will happen when it comes down to practical play.

“Karpov’s performances show that by nature he is very determined. His chess philosophy is sharply outlined. This is very important. Many young players unfortunately lack a precise chess credo. And yet every talented developing player ought to have his own outlook, his tastes, his predilections, his point of view on specific problems of chess – theoretical, practical, philosophical ones. Fischer possesses strongly defined tastes and he is astonishingly consistent in his sympathies. With Karpov we can observe roughly the same thing. It is true that Karpov’s style is in the process of evolving. I think he will be a universal player, a player of many facets.”

In the international tournaments of 1975 Petrosian played with his customary stock of “solidity”, which merely enabled him to maintain his high rating where it was. In the high-calibre tournament at Las Palmas he was only seventh, but in the Milan super-tournament he shared 2nd-4th places with Ljubojevic, behind Karpov and Portisch. In the Alekhine Memorial, which was held in Moscow on the eve of the 43rd USSR Championship, Petrosian had to settle for sharing 6th-7th places with Hort.

The Top League of the 43rd Championship was staged in Yerevan. Naturally Petrosian could not let his admirers down. Yet notwithstanding the support of the Armenian fans who packed the 2000 seats of the Philharmonic concert hall every day, he was left in the shade by the Moscow master Boris Gulko, who took the lead at the start of the tournament and didn't relinquish it until just at the finish. Three rounds before the end of the tournament, Tigran Vartanovich was trailing the leader by a whole point, and in his next two games, only wins would do (as everyone knows, Petrosian's “rule” was to decide a tournament before the final round). After he had beaten Beliavsky, the gap was narrowed to the minimum, and the fate of the tournament hung on Petrosian's duel with Gulko himself. The ex-World Champion conducted the decisive battle in his regal manner, patiently transforming one type of minimal advantage into another, and on the 95th move (!) he finally stifled his rival. Petrosian became Champion of the USSR for the fourth time.

Straight after the tournament, the journalists descended on Petrosian.

“How do you explain the very interesting course of events in the 43rd national Championship?”

“At the start of the 1950s, when I was young, it wasn't customary to divide the national Championships into ‘interesting’ and ‘uninteresting’ ones. There was a fascinating struggle in all of them.

“The 43rd Championship undoubtedly turned out to be one of the most fascinating of recent years. Once people start putting together their views on the Yerevan tournament, I know that some of them will say its success had to do with the ‘clash of generations’, with the ‘thirty move rule’, and so on, and so forth. As for me, I'm convinced that the chief heroes of the Championship were the Yerevan spectators. With their love of chess and the interest they took, they ‘compelled’ the participants to give everything they had, right to the end – to play with the utmost exertion. All chessplayers are bound to agree with me that performing in an overcrowded hall, even if it's a little noisy, is better than playing in a half-empty and cold one.”

“Before the start of the Championship, were you counting on finishing first?”

“The line-up for the tournament was very strong, and naturally I couldn't firmly count on victory. But I very much wanted to do well in Yerevan, I prepared properly and thought my chances of first place were not bad.”

“But after drawing your last-round game, did you expect to be first on your own?”

“Of course, any of my pursuers had a realistic chance to catch me. But at the same time the final round has its own laws, and winning ‘to order’ in the last round is extremely difficult. That is why, for instance, I try not to leave the decisive game to the last day if I can help it.”

“What is your opinion of the young prizewinners in the Championship?”

“Vaganian, Romanishin and Balashov all have distinct successes to their credit already, both in this tournament and overall. But frankly, the play of the first two of them impressed me more. The games of Vaganian and Romanishin show more imagination and inventiveness, more independent ideas; their play is more in keeping with their years. Generally speaking, from the point of view of creativity, Romanishin was one of the heroes of this Championship. He could just do with a bit more stability and erudition, just as the others could do with a bit more imagination and creative vigour...”

Petrosian also played in the next two Championships of the country. Like other fellow veterans, he was in no hurry to give ground to the new generation of youth; and just as before, he not only achieved good results (sharing 3rd-4th places in the USSR Championships of 1976 and 1977) but also produced some genuine creative masterpieces.

GAME 103

Tigran Petrosian – Alexander Beliavsky

Yerevan 1975

Notes by I. Zaitsev

1.c4 c5 2.♖f3 g6 3.e4 ♘c6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♗xd4 ♗f6

From all the evidence, the Grandmaster from Lvov must have prepared this variation specially for the championship in Yerevan. It cannot have been fortuitous that he employed it in his most critical duels, against Petrosian and Polugaevsky.

6.♗c3 ♗xd4 7.♞xd4

As is well known, 7.e5 ♗g8 8.♗c3 ♗g7 gives Black no worries.

7...d6 8.♗g5 ♗g7 9.♞d2

According to a different opinion, the queen should not leave d4 until driven away. But the timely prophylactic move that Petrosian plays is more in keeping with his style.

9...0-0

In his game with Polugaevsky in round 9, Beliavsky had continued with 9...♗e6. After 10.♞c1 ♞c8 11.b3 ♞a5 12.f3 h6 13.♗e3 0-0 14.♗d3 (in the event of 14.♗xh6 ♗xh6 15.♞xh6, Black has the pleasant choice between regaining his pawn with 15...b5 and stirring up complications in the centre with 15...d5?! 16.exd5 ♗xd5 17.♞d2 ♗b4) 14...♗h7 15.0-0 a6 16.h3 ♗d7 17.f4 f5 18.exf5 ♗xf5, White succeeded in gaining the advantage. This time the young Grandmaster opts for a different arrangement of his pieces, endeavouring to exert more pressure on his opponent's pawn centre.

10.♗d3 a6

[Ed. note: Beliavsky comments, “In a Maroczy structure Black does better to operate on the dark squares with 10...a5 followed by ...♗f6-d7-c5, as played by a great specialist in these formations – Grandmaster Dragoljub Velimirovic.”]

11.0-0 ♗d7

The post on c6 to which the bishop is presently heading has its positive points in comparison with e6. Black gives himself the possibility of bombarding White's central outpost – the e5-pawn – and at the same time prepares the undermining move ...b7-b5.

12.♞fe1 ♗c6

It is hardly worth considering 12...♞b8, with the idea of ...♞c8 and ...b7-b5. Even with 13.♗d5 (or 13.♗xf6 ♗xf6 14.♗d5 ♗c6

15. ♖xf6† exf6 16. ♖h6) 13... ♖xd5 14. exd5, White easily obtains the better position.

13. ♖a1 e6

Most likely, when considering 13...b5 here, Black didn't like the reply 14. ♖d5 (whereas 14. cxb5 axb5 15. ♖xb5 ♖xb5 16. ♖xb5 ♖xa2 would suit him). He therefore hastens to secure d5 against invasion.

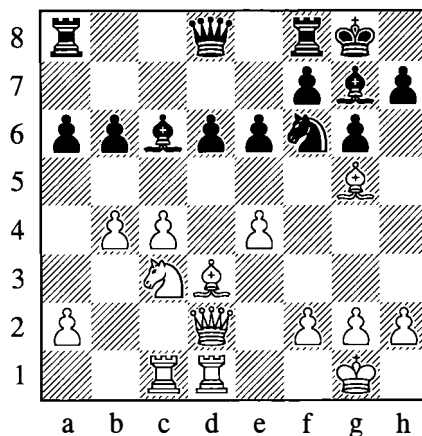
14. b4 b6

Black's position is fully equipped for defence, but it calls to mind a house without doors, in which the queen is incarcerated. After 14...b5, Black would simply come out a pawn down.

15. ♖ed1!

A subtle move. The position of a rook *vis-à-vis* the queen always means trouble for one of the players. In addition, pressure against the black d-pawn is distinctly materializing. An attempt to manoeuvre the white queen to h4 at once would not be successful, since on 15. ♖f4 Black could rid himself of the awkward pin by 15... ♖h5.

A move that looked tempting was 15. c5?!. However, after 15...bxc5 (better than 15...e5 16. cxb6 ♖xb6 17. a3, when White has an appreciable advantage thanks to his control of the d5-point; 15...h6 16. ♖xh6 is also unsatisfactory for Black, as either 16... ♖xh6 17. ♖xh6 dxc5 18. ♖e3 or 16...dxc5 17. e5 ♖d5 18. ♖e4 gives White an attack) 16. bxc5 e5 17. ♖d5 ♖xd5 18. exd5 dxc5 19. ♖xc5 ♖d6! 20. ♖c6 ♖xd5 21. ♖xf6 h6 (if 21... ♖ad8, then 22. ♖f3) 22. ♖h4 (22. ♖e2, counting on 22...hxg5 23. ♖xg6 fxg6 24. ♖c4, is well answered by 22...e4) 22... ♖ad8 (not 22...g5? 23. ♖h7†) 23. ♖f3 g5, the threat of 24...e4 (in answer to 24. ♖g3) enables Black to re-establish the material balance.



15... ♖e7

A mistaken decision. Another unsatisfactory move is 15... ♖c7. Admittedly after the hasty 16. ♖d5 ♖d8, White would be forced to go back where he came from – with 17. ♖c3. However, a good answer to 15... ♖c7 is the preliminary 16. ♖b1, when the threat to capture on d6 forces one of the black rooks to occupy the d8-square. After that, the 17. ♖d5 strike gains considerably in strength.

It would also be dangerous to play 15... ♖b8 16. ♖b1 ♖d8 17. b5 (the consequences of an immediate 17. e5 are not entirely clear: 17...dxe5 18. ♖xd8† ♖xd8 19. ♖xd8† ♖xd8 20. ♖e4, and now 20... ♖e8 21. ♖b7, or 20... ♖a8 21. c5) 17...axb5 18. cxb5 ♖b7 (if 18... ♖e8, then 19. e5 is decisive: 19...dxe5 20. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 21. ♖xd8 ♖xd8 22. ♖e4) 19. ♖e3, and Black loses material.

The correct defence consisted of the manoeuvre 15... ♖a7!, envisaging the variation 16. ♖b1 ♖d7 17. ♖f4 ♖h5 18. ♖xd8 ♖xf4 19. ♖xb6 ♖xc3 20. ♖xc3 ♖e2†, but also preparing to bring the queen to a8 if necessary, increasing the pressure on the e4-pawn.

Having lost the correct thread, Black lands in a difficult position.

16. ♖f4!

The reply Black had not foreseen. We are now already talking about a lethal pin on the knight, seeing that ...e6-e5 and ...♖e6 would be tantamount to strategic capitulation.

16... ♖f8 17. a3

By now White has no need to hurry, and he waits for the ripened fruit to fall to the ground of its own accord.

17... ♖ac8 18. ♖h4 a5 19. h3 ♖c7 20. f4 h6

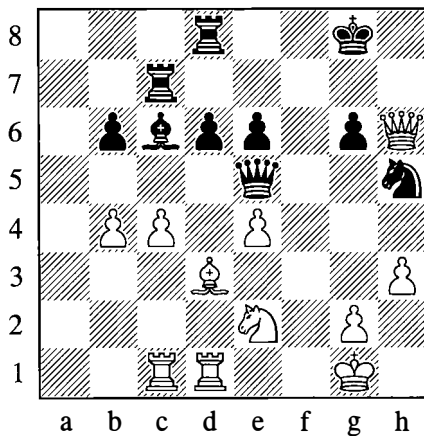
The threat of e4-e5 can only be parried at the cost of a pawn.

21. ♙xh6 ♙xh6 22. ♖xh6 axb4 23. axb4 ♘h5 24. ♙e2 ♘f6 25. ♙d3

Repeating moves to gain time on the clock.

25... ♘h5 26. f5 ♖f6

The impression that dark-square counterplay has turned up for Black is illusory.

27. ♘e2 ♖e5 28. fxg6 fxg6**29. ♖e3**

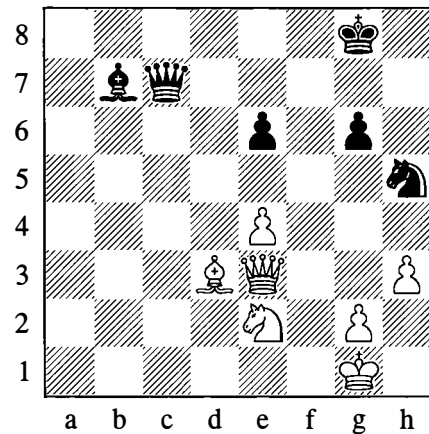
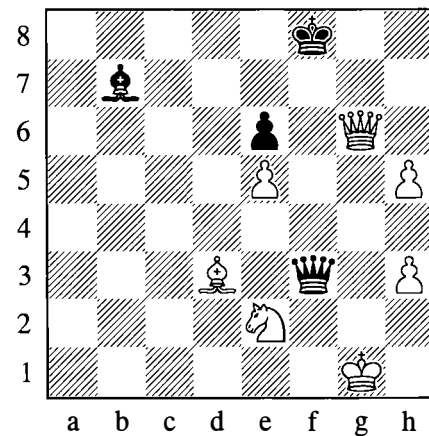
White takes aim at the pawn on b6. This of course is better than 29. ♖xg6 ♗g7 30. ♖h6 ♙xe4, when Black goes over to the counter-attack.

29... ♖b8 30. c5

Wrecking Black's defence for good.

30... bxc5 31. bxc5 ♖d8

A more stubborn try was 31...d5, though after 32. ♖d4 White should still win.

32. cxd6 ♖xd6 33. ♖c5 ♖d5 34. ♖c3 ♖dd7 35. ♖dc1 ♙b7 36. ♖xc7 ♖xc7 37. ♖xc7 ♖xc7**38. e5! ♗g7 39. ♖g5 ♖f7 40. g4 ♖f3 41. ♖xg6 ♗f8 42. gxh5**

Black resigned.

1-0

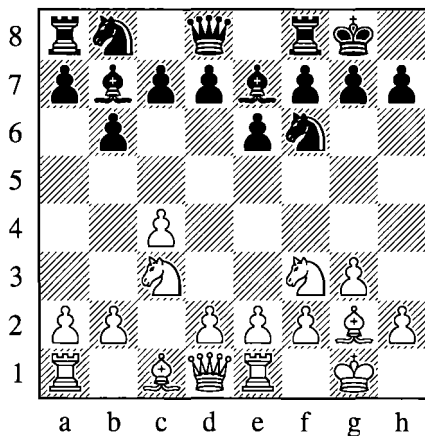
GAME 104

Tigran Petrosian – Boris Gulko

Yerevan 1975

Notes By A. Mikhalechishin and O. Stetsko

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♖c3 e6 3.♗f3 b6 4.g3 ♘b7
5.♙g2 ♙e7 6.0–0 0–0 7.♞e1!



With this move Tigran Vartanovich anticipated the development of opening theory by a good 40 years. Nowadays this method of play against the Queen's Indian without an early d2-d4 has become very popular.

7...d5

Gulko didn't like the "hedgehog" structure that can come about after 7...c5, or the similar one after 7...♗e4 8.♗xe4 ♙xe4 9.d3 ♘b7 10.e4 c5 11.d4.

8.cxd5 exd5 9.d4 ♗bd7

Another way to prepare ...c7-c5 is to develop with 9...♗a6, so that the knight doesn't get in the way of other pieces. Then after 10.♙e3, the correct arrangement of Black's forces was demonstrated by Petrosian: 10...c6 11.♗e5 ♗d7 12.♗d3 ♞e8 13.♞a4?! ♙f6 14.♞ad1 ♗c7

15.♗b4 b5! 16.♞c2 ♗e6, Panno – Petrosian, Buenos Aires 1979.

10.♞b3 c5 11.dxc5

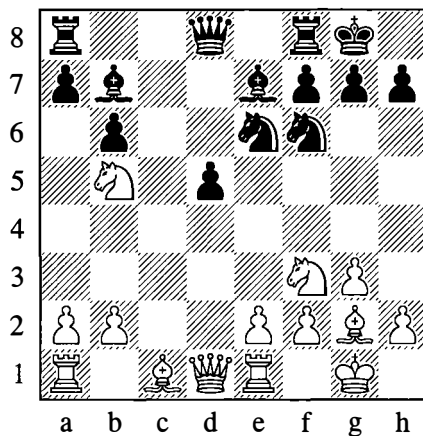
A purely prophylactic decision. The variation 11.♙f4 cxd4 12.♗xd4 ♗c5 13.♞c2 ♗e6 14.e3 ♗xf4 15.gxf4 promised White some advantage, but Petrosian knew that Gulko wasn't too fond of playing with an isolated pawn.

11...♗xc5 12.♞d1 ♗e6?

Gulko attempts to take the blockade square d4 under control, but he needed to go for active play in the centre with 12...♗ce4. After that, attacking the isolated pawn would not be simple for White.

13.♗b5

There is less promise in fighting for the d4-point by 13.♙e3 ♙c5 14.♞d3 ♗e4 15.♞ad1 ♗xc3 16.bxc3.



13...♙b4?!

In principle, in positions with an isolated d5-pawn, an exchange of bishops is favourable to White. It would be more logical to work up pressure in the centre with 13...♗e4 14.♗bd4 ♙c5 15.♙e3 ♞f6 16.♞a4 a5 17.♞ad1 ♙a6.

14.♙d2 ♙c5

Black retreats, but it was also possible to play 14...♙xd2 15.♖xd2 ♘e4 16.♗e3 ♗f6 17.♖ab1 ♙a6 18.♘bd4 ♖ac8 19.♗ed1 ♗fe8 with approximate equality.

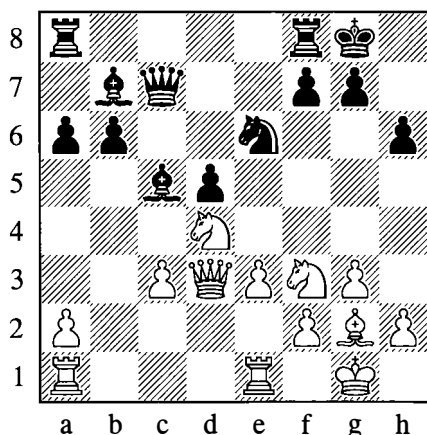
15.e3

A more enterprising line was 15.b4 ♙e7 16.♗b3 ♗d7 17.a4 ♘e4 18.♙e3 ♙f6 19.♖ac1.

15...♘e4 16.♙c3 a6 17.♘bd4 ♘xc3 18.bxc3 ♗c7

The weak pawn on c3 is of no particular significance; it is difficult to attack.

19.♗d3 h6



20.♗e2!

This mysterious manoeuvre is comparable to other Petrosian mysteries. Here we can nevertheless detect a readiness to start pressurizing the b-file, so as to provoke ...b6-b5 and then attack with a2-a4. At the same time Petrosian also leaves himself with other options open.

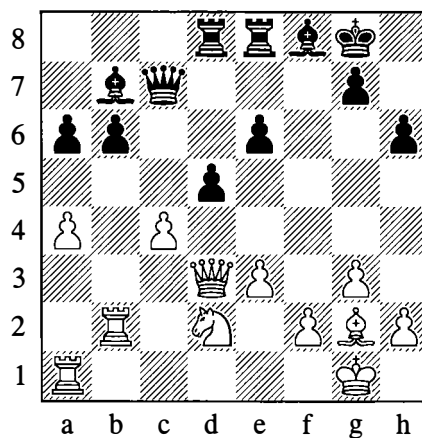
20...♗fe8 21.a4 ♙f8 22.♗b2

Here it was possible to deviate from White's original plan and play 22.♘xe6 fxe6 23.♗g6 ♗xc3 24.♖b1.

22...♖ab8 23.♘xe6! fxe6 24.♘d2!

This and the last move are interlinked: White prepares to assail the d-pawn with c3-c4, when Black will be faced with accepting an isolated pawn on d5 again, or a weak pawn on e6.

24...♖bd8 25.c4



The result of Petrosian's strategic scheme is to saddle Black with "pawn islands" that are not simple to defend.

25...a5

An improvement was 25...♙c5.

26.cxd5 ♙xd5 27.♙xd5 ♖xd5

Capturing with 27...exd5?! looks weaker, as after 28.♖b5 ♙c5 29.♘b3 and ♖d1 White attacks the isolated pawn.

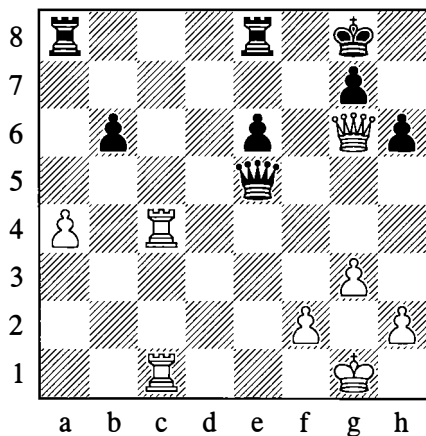
28.♗g6 ♖dd8 29.♖c2 ♗d7 30.♘c4 ♙c5 31.♘xa5 ♙xe3 32.♘c6 ♙d4?!

A more tenacious move is 32...♖c8, for if White then plays the natural 33.♘e5 ♗d4 34.♖xc8, Black has a concealed defensive resource: 34...♙xf2† 35.♘g2 ♗d5†! 36.♘xf2 ♖xc8 – and faced with the threats of ...♗d4† and ...♗xe5, White cannot save his knight. After 37.♖e1 (37.♘f3 ♖f8) 37...♖f8† 38.♘g1 ♗d4† 39.♘h1 ♗d5†, Black draws by perpetual check.

33.♖a1 ♖a8 34.♜xd4

Black could meet 34.♖d2 with 34...e5 35.♜xd4 exd4 36.♝xb6 ♖xa4.

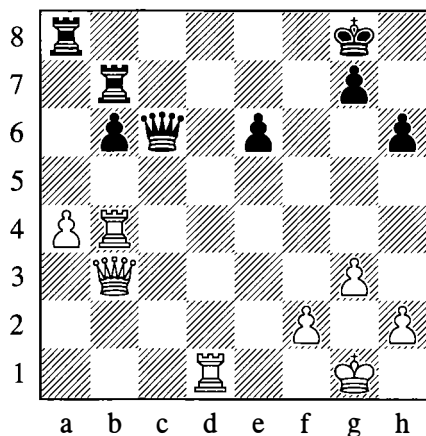
34...♝xd4 35.♞c4 ♞e5



36.♞b1!

White's advantage, with two pawn "islands" against Black's three, is obvious. To attack the black pawns, Petrosian regroupes his forces.

36...♞eb8 37.♞b4 ♞d6 38.♖d1 ♞c6 39.♞b3 ♞b7



40.♞c4!

Handling his major pieces in splendid coordination, White switches to a siege of the e6-pawn.

40...♝c8 41.♞e4 ♖d7

The pawn is not to be defended: if 41...♜f7 then 42.♖d6.

42.♖xd7 ♝xd7 43.♞xe6

Of course not 43.♝xe6? ♝xe6 44.♞xe6 ♖xa4 45.♞xb6 ♖a2, with realistic chances of salvation in the rook endgame.

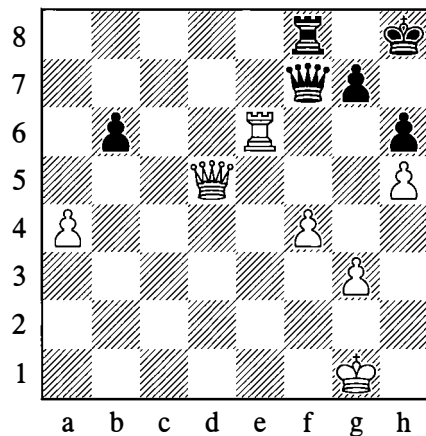
43...♝f7 44.h4 ♖b8 45.h5

Petrosian methodically improves his position without being diverted into a pawn race by 45.a5 b5 (45...♖f8 46.♝xb6) 46.a6 b4 – even though that too should lead to a win after 47.♝e3 b3 48.♞b6.

45...♖a8 46.f3

Here 46.♜g2! ♝b7† 47.f3 was more precise.

46...♜f8 47.♝b4† ♜g8 48.♝c4 ♖f8 49.f4 ♜h8 50.♝d5



Centralizing the major pieces is an important expedient for exploiting an advantage in this kind of ending.

50...♝a7?

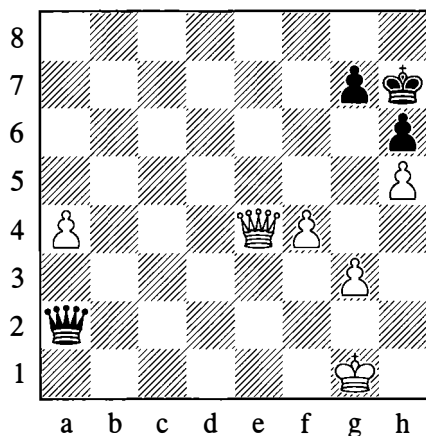
This leads to the loss of a second pawn. A more stubborn defence was 50...♝c7, but after 51.♝e5! Black would have to face going into a rook endgame. In the event of 51...♝xe5

52.fxe5 ♖a8 53.♙xb6 ♖xa4 54.♙b8† ♔h7 55.♔f2, White centralizes his king while Black, with his own king cut off, cannot do without playing ...g7-g6. White's tasks are more complicated in the case of 51...♙c1† 52.♔g2 ♙d2† 53.♔h3 ♙d7, but by improving his position with 54.g4 ♙d3† 55.♔h4 ♙d8† 56.♔g3 ♙d3† 57.♙e3 he can still bring a rook endgame about; after 57...♙xe3† 58.♙xe3 ♖a8 59.♙e4 ♖a5 60.♙b4 a king march to the queenside should be decisive.

51.♙d4 ♔h7 52.♙xb6 ♙a5 53.♙e4† ♔h8 54.♙b5 ♙d2 55.♙d5 ♙a2 56.♙e5

White heads into a won queen endgame.

56...♙b8 57.♙e8† ♙xe8 58.♙xe8† ♔h7 59.♙e4†!



The centralization of the queen is an important factor in the conduct of a queen endgame. In what follows, White converts his material plus into a win by combining threats against the king – resulting from the advance of his g-pawn – with the threat to push his outside passed pawn on the queenside.

59...♔h8 60.g4

A simpler way was 60.♙e8† ♔h7 61.♙b5, preparing the advance of the passed pawn.

60...♙d2 61.♔f1 ♔g8 62.♙e8† ♔h7 63.♙g6† ♔g8 64.♙e8† ♔h7 65.♙e4† ♔g8

Yudovich recommended 65...♔h8, but 66.f5! is a strong reply.

66.g5

Another plan involves marching the king to the opponent's rear: 66.f5! ♙d1† 67.♔f2 ♙d2† 68.♔f3 ♙d1† 69.♔g3 ♙g1† 70.♔f4 ♙h2† 71.♔e3.

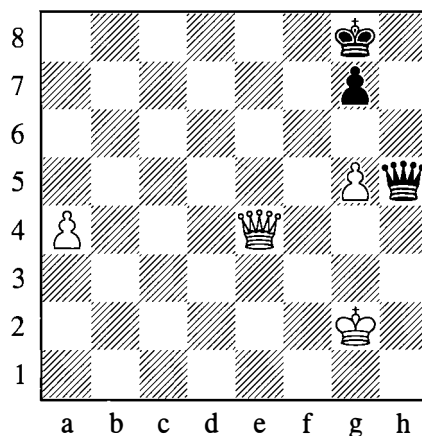
66...hxcg5

Winning the h5-pawn would shut the queen out of play: 66...♙d1† 67.♔f2 hxcg5 (on 67...♙xh5, White creates a second passed pawn by means of 68.♙e6† ♔f8 69.♙d6† ♔g8 70.gxh6) 68.fxcg5 ♙xh5 69.♙d5† ♔h8 70.a5.

67.fxcg5 ♙d1†

On 67...♙xcg5, White exchanges queens with 68.♙e8† ♔h7 69.♙g6†.

68.♔g2 ♙xh5



69.g6

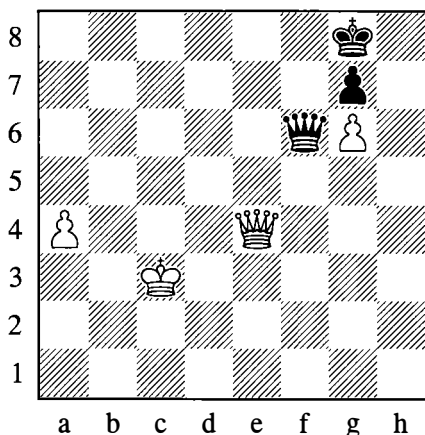
The geometrically precise manoeuvre 69.♙d5† ♔h8 70.♙d8† ♔h7 71.♙d3† ♔g8 72.♙b3†! would have forced the exchange of queens.

69...♖g5† 70.♔h3 ♜h5† 71.♔g3 ♜g5†
72.♔f3 ♜h5†

Or 72...♜f6† 73.♔g4 ♜d8 74.a5, and since the black queen cannot leave the 8th rank in view of the mate threat, the white king will go to the aid of the passed pawn.

73.♔e3 ♜c5† 74.♔e2 ♜h5† 75.♔d2 ♜h2†
76.♔c3 ♜g3† 77.♔c4 ♜c7† 78.♔d4 ♜b6†
79.♔c3 ♜f6†

Black does no better with 79...♜a5†
80.♔d3 (80.♔b3 ♜b6†) 80...♔f8 81.♜f4†
♔e7 82.♜c4, threatening ♜f7†.



80.♔d3

True to the endgame rule of “not hurrying”, Petrosian embarks on a second circuit. But there was a shorter path: 80.♔c2! ♜f2†
81.♔d3 ♜g3† 82.♔d4 ♜g1† 83.♔d5 ♜g5†
84.♔e6 ♜d8 85.♜d5.

80...♜d6† 81.♔e2 ♜h2† 82.♔f1 ♜h3†
83.♔g1 ♜g3† 84.♔f1 ♜h3† 85.♔e1 ♜g3†
86.♔d1 ♜g1† 87.♔c2 ♜h2† 88.♔b3 ♜b8†
89.♔a3

Here White had the stronger 89.♔c3! ♜g3†
90.♔d4 ♜f2† 91.♔d5, setting up the winning formation.

89...♜d6† 90.♔b2 ♜b6† 91.♔c3 ♜f6†

The position after move 79 is repeated; but

before the game is resumed for the second time, Petrosian finds the winning manoeuvre.

92.♔c2 ♔f8

Or 92...♜f2† 93.♔d3 ♜g3† 94.♔d4.

93.♜a8† ♔e7 94.♜b7† ♔d8 95.♜d5†

Black resigned. There is no escaping the exchange of queens: 95...♔e7 96.♜f7†, or 95...♔c8 96.♜g8† and ♜g8-f7†.

1-0

Petrosian's defeat in the Candidates semi-final meant that in the next Championship cycle he had to begin in 1976 from the Interzonal. The tournament was held in Biel, and three tickets to the Candidates stage were at stake. In spite of unexpectedly losing to the rank outsider Castro, who was rated 250 points below him (in a won position the ex-World Champion failed to defend against a sudden attack on his king), Petrosian shared 2nd-4th places with Portisch and Tal, half a point behind Larsen.

To eliminate one of the three equal finishers, an extra quadruple-round match-tournament was held two months later in the Italian city of Varese. Amidst a desert of draws, the fate of the two former Champions was decided by Portisch. He lost a game to Petrosian and won one against Tal, which placed the contestants in the following order: (1) Petrosian, 4½ points out of 8; (2) Portisch, 4; (3) Tal, 3½.

However, the draw for the Candidates matches turned out unkindly for Petrosian; in the quarter-finals he had to play Korchnoi. After defeating him in 1974, Korchnoi was Petrosian's most difficult opponent, and the ex-World Champion did not succeed in solving this problem. Yet in contrast to the short match in Odessa, their 1977 duel in Ciocco was exceptionally hard-fought. Petrosian lost by the smallest possible margin: 5½:6½ (+1 -2 =9).

Running ahead, we may note that in the following Candidates cycle the luck of the draw went against Petrosian once more. *Again* he had to begin with a match against Korchnoi, and again success eluded him. Say what you will, time takes its toll. But it must be said that 14 years of play at the highest level is a record of sporting longevity!

GAME 105

Tigran Petrosian – Lajos Portisch

Varese 1976

Notes by I. Zaitsev

1.d4 ♖f6 2.♗f3 e6 3.g3 b5

Black displays a certain “refractoriness” in the opening. It appears that neither the Catalan nor the Queen’s Indian suits him.

4.♗g2 ♗b7 5.0–0 c5 6.♗g5 ♗e7 7.c3 ♖a6 8.e3

White plays to restrict the black knight – he wants to be able to answer 8...cxd4 with 9.exd4. However, if we are assessing the position overall, we may conclude that Black has obtained a fully satisfactory game.

8...♟b8 9.♗bd2 0–0 10.a3

White aims to advance with b2-b4, after which his position would deserve preference. With his next moves Portisch attempts to hinder this plan.

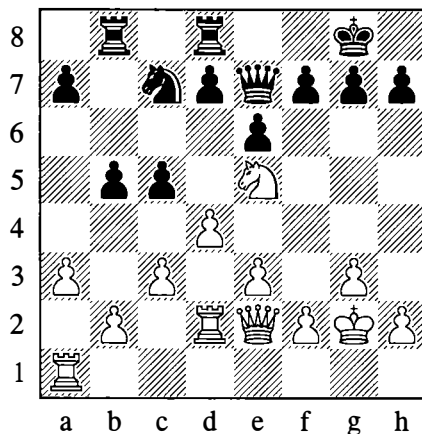
10...♗e4 11.♗xe7 ♟xe7 12.♟e2 ♗c7 13.♟fd1

Creating a threat to win a pawn by 14.♗xe4 ♗xe4 15.dxc5 ♟xc5 16.♟xd7. For the moment therefore Black is forced to defend the seventh rank.

13...♟fd8 14.♗e5 ♗xd2 15.♟xd2

Instead 15.♗xb7 would be a gross error in view of 15...♗b3, winning the exchange.

15...♗xg2 16.♗xg2



16...♗d5

The Hungarian Grandmaster made this move very quickly, hardly giving it a thought. Nonetheless this very manoeuvre with the knight was to be the root cause of Black’s subsequent difficulties. On c7 the knight is not at all worse placed than on f6, while the loss of two tempi which this plan entails will soon make itself felt.

As a general rule it seems to me that Portisch conducts the struggle with great ease and confidence as long as there is a possibility available for improving the position of his pieces. Yet this constant solicitude for his pieces can sometimes serve him badly. Those who recall the decisive final encounter of the Petrosian – Portisch match in Mallorca (see game 102) are likely to note that all Portisch’s misfortunes in that game began precisely with an analogous repositioning of his knight.

17.e4 ♗f6 18.♗g4

White decides to take the game into a major piece ending. Another plan also deserved attention: 18.b4 c4 19.a4 a5. As Petrosian revealed after the game, it was because of this

very counter-stroke that he rejected the plan based on b2-b4. However, to all appearances, with 20.♖b2! White would retain the better chances. Also, if Black meets 18.b4 with 18...cxd4 (18...cxb4 19.axb4 is indisputably in White's favour) 19.cxd4 ♖d6!? (19...♗dc8 20.♗c2 ♖d6 21.♗ac1 ♗xc2 22.♖xc2 again gives White the better ending) 20.♗c1 ♖a6, then after 21.♖d3 the advantage is with White. Thus, by means of 18.b4! Petrosian could have gained a distinct plus.

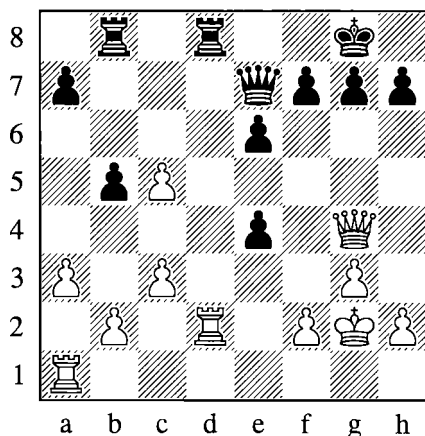
Another plan again was possible: 18.♗e1 (preparing d4-d5; the immediate 18.d5 would fail to 18...exd5 19.exd5 ♗e8) 18...cxd4 19.cxd4 ♗dc8 (or 19...b4 20.d5 exd5 21.exd5 bxa3 22.d6 ♖e6 23.bxa3, and the pawn on d6 ensures White a plus) 20.d5 exd5 21.exd5, with a double-edged situation.

18...♟xg4 19.♖xg4 d5

Black overrates his resources. The move in the spirit of the position was 19...d6, setting up a solid a pawn front. The game would then be equal. Now some uneasy times for Black are beginning.

20.dxc5 dxe4

If 20...♖xc5 then 21.♗ad1, and the pressure along the d-file is highly unpleasant.



21.♗ad1!

This little tactical stab had clearly been underestimated by Black. He will now have some hard work to do to save the game.

21...♗xd2

Or 21...f5 22.♖f4, and the rook on b8 comes under fire.

22.♗xd2 ♖xc5

The lesser evil. The obvious-looking 22...e3 is dubious on account of 23.♗d6!, giving White a very strong position.

23.♖xe4

Or 23.♖f4 ♖c8! 24.♖xe4 ♖c7, transposing. So White has seized the only open file, which is always of paramount importance in a major piece ending.

23...♖c7 24.♖d3 h6 25.♖d7 ♖c5

Going into a rook endgame would be extremely risky for Black; the white king would quickly reach the queenside.

26.♗d3 a5

Now White constantly has to watch out for ...b5-b4.

27.♗f3 ♗f8 28.♗f4 e5 29.♗e4 ♟h8 30.♗e3

The rook moves around with tortoise-like steps, trying to provoke a weakness in the opponent's position. But despite all White's efforts, the black position remains fully defensible.

30...f6

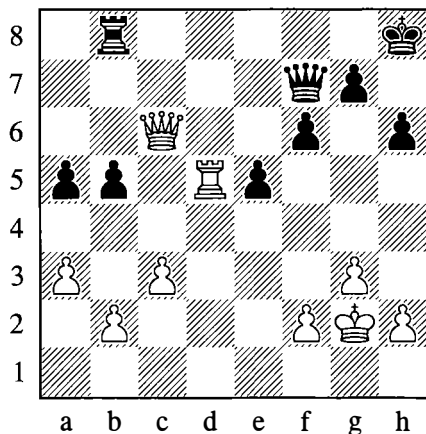
Of course not 30...f5? 31.b4!, and Black suffers material losses.

31.♗d3 ♗b8

The most dependable move was 31...♖c4, after which Black would never again have to fear a queen exchange.

32.♖d6 ♖a7

Now as before, the transition to a rook endgame would entail distinct troubles for Black.

33.♖c6 ♖f7 34.♞d5**34...♞g6?**

Unexpectedly White is joined by a valuable ally – his opponent's time trouble. Under pressure from the clock, Portisch commits an irrevocable blunder that loses a crucial pawn. To be fair, it must be said that Black would also have a hard time defending after 34...♞b7 35.♞xb7 ♞xb7 36.♔f3. But after 34...b4 35.♞xa5 bxc3 36.♞xc3 ♞b7†, White's win would still remain fairly problematic.

35.♞xe5 ♞d3 36.♞c5

At this stage another path to the goal was 36.♞e7, combining the bombardment of Black's queenside weaknesses with an attack on his king.

36...b4 37.cxb4 axb4 38.a4 ♞b3 39.♞c2

The most energetic line was 39.a5 ♞xb2 40.a6 ♞a2 41.♞b7. But by this time White too had only seconds left, and he therefore preferred not to risk anything.

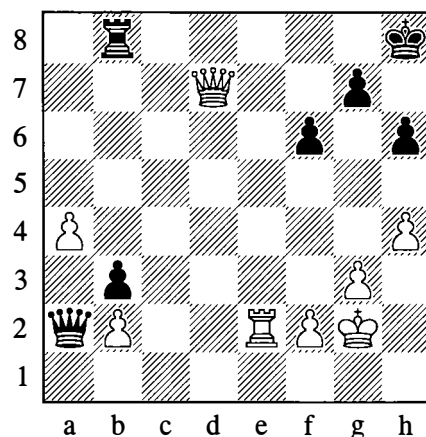
39...♞a2 40.♞e2 ♔h7 41.h4

Probably 41.♞c2† ♔h8 42.b3 was a little simpler, but in the time scramble White makes one more move "just in case". Black's position, of course, remains lost all the same.

In this position the game was adjourned, and Portisch sealed. In our adjournment analysis we were able to establish that after 41...f5 42.♞f3 ♞xa4 43.♞xf5† ♔h8 44.♞e6 ♞a8† 45.♞e4, the endgame would be dismal for Black. We therefore switched all our attention to 41...b3, and reached complete agreement to answer it with 42.♞d7!. When the game was resumed, one of our main variations occurred.

41...b3 42.♞d7! ♔h8!

The best chance.

**43.♞e7 ♞g8**

After 43...♞xb2, the continuation would be 44.♞xg7 ♞c2 45.♞f7! (this "quiet" move, weaving a mating net around the black king, is the point of White's play) 45...♞e4† (there is no other defence against 46.♞g6) 46.f3! (not 46.♔g1 ♞b1† 47.♔h2 ♞f5, and Black succeeds in defending) 46...♞e2† (or 46...♞c2† 47.♔h3 ♞f5† 48.♞g4 with quite a simple win) 47.♔h3 ♞f1† 48.♔g4, and White wins: 48...♞b4† 49.♔h5 ♞xf3† 50.g4; or 48...f5† 49.♔h5 ♞xf3† 50.g4; or 48...♞d3 49.♞xf6 (but not 49.♞g6?? ♞xg6† 50.♞xg6 ♞g8).

44. ♖d4 ♜a8 45. ♜b7

Another plan was also possible: 45. ♜c7 ♜g8 (the a-pawn is invulnerable) 46. ♜c1!, leaving the black queen without a single move. White then prepares a breakthrough with g3-g4-g5 and concludes the struggle with a mating attack.

45... ♜e8

Of course, 45... ♜xa4 (45... ♜xa4? 46. ♜d7 and mates) would be bad on account of 46. ♜b8† ♔h7 47. ♜d3† g6 48. ♜b7† ♔h8 49. ♜b6 ♔g7 50. h5!. Black is completely helpless.

46. ♜b5 ♜c8 47. ♜b4 ♜g8 48. ♜c3 ♜a8 49. ♜f3!

Black resigned, as he is losing a second pawn. 1–0

GAME 106

Boris Gulko – Tigran Petrosian

Moscow 1976

Notes by Suetin

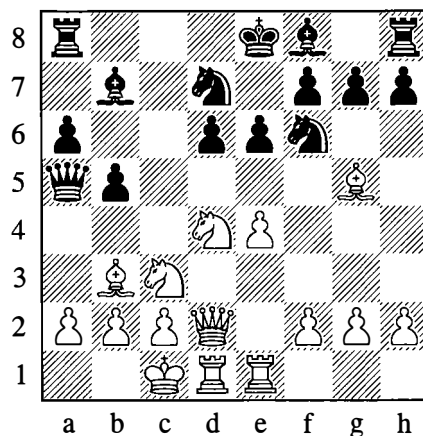
1. e4 c5 2. ♘f3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♘xd4 ♘f6 5. ♘c3 a6 6. ♙g5 ♘bd7

The opening moves already display the ex-World Champion's combative, uncompromising mood. Petrosian has liked this formation for Black for a long time now, and he sometimes has recourse to it at crucial moments in tournament and even match play. When such variations are played, an opening novelty can be expected at any time.

7. ♙c4 ♜a5 8. ♜d2 e6 9. 0–0–0 b5 10. ♙b3

It has long been known that the notorious sacrifice 10. ♙xe6? is not good here. After 10... fxe6 11. ♘xe6 ♔f7 12. ♙xf6 ♘xf6 13. ♘g5† ♔g8 14. ♜f4 b4! the situation resolves itself in

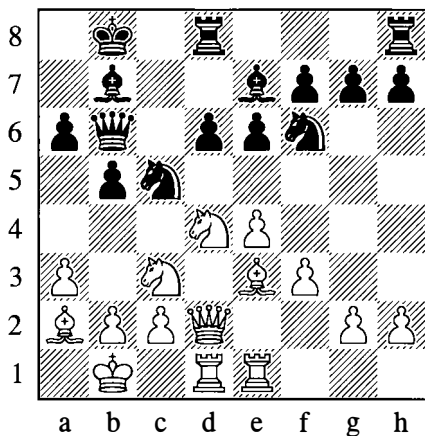
Black's favour. Nor is 10. ♙d5 b4! 11. ♙xa8 bxc3 good for White.

10... ♙b7 11. ♜he1

Now comes the move that gives the opening its character. The most widespread continuations here are known to be 11... ♘c5, 11... ♜c8 and 11... ♙e7. In the case of 11... ♙e7, Black's plans involve castling long. For example: 12. f4 ♘c5 13. ♙xf6 gxf6 14. ♜e3 0–0–0, with double-edged play.

This time, Black commits his king straight away. His move cannot be called an innovation. I should point out that it had been seen already in the games Sherwin – Reshevsky, New York 1959 and Rubinetti – Bielicki, Buenos Aires 1964. The latter continued 12. f4 h6 13. ♙xf6 ♘xf6 14. a3 d5 15. e5 ♘d7 16. ♔b1 g6 17. g4 ♜b6 18. f5 gxf5 19. gxf5 ♘c5 20. fxe6 fxe6 21. ♜g1 ♜h7 22. ♜g6 ♜e7 23. ♜e2 ♙g7? 24. ♘f5, and White obtained a clear plus. The impression is that the chief testing of Black's plan with 11... 0–0–0 still lies ahead, and in this connection the present game is of considerable value.

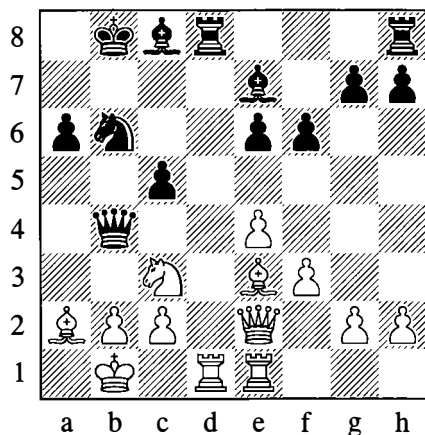
11... 0–0–0 12. a3 ♙e7 13. ♔b1 ♜b6! 14. f3 ♔b8 15. ♙e3 ♘c5 16. ♙a2

**16...b4!**

Black conducts an active defence with great delicacy. Although Black's last move was virtually forced (White was threatening to play b2-b4! himself), we must not ignore the fact that this move had already been envisaged when the queen went to b6, and that it forms an important link in a plan for queenside counterplay.

[Ed. note: Gulko gives this move a question mark. He considers 16...♞c7 to be better, with a view to 17.b4 ♜cd7 – when there is no danger to Black in 18.♜dxb5 axb5 19.♜xb5 ♞c6 20.c4, with complex play.]

17.axb4 ♞xb4 18.♜b3 ♜fd7 19.♙g5! f6
20.♙e3 ♜b6 21.♜xc5 dxc5 22.♞e2 ♙c8



Though White has managed to induce a weakening of the e6-point, the overall weight of his strategic gains is not great. The impression is that Black has solved his main problem by nullifying White's possibilities of an attack with pieces on the queenside. Moreover Black is gradually preparing counterplay of his own in the chief sector of the battle, where both kings are located.

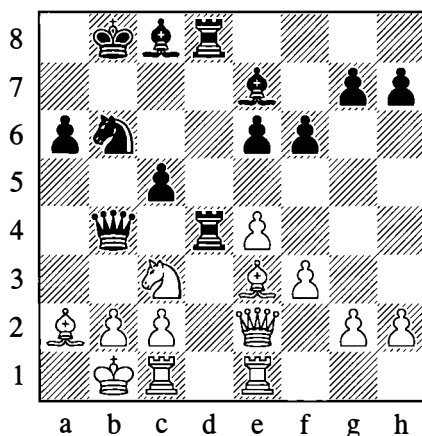
23.♙d2

This move was censured by many pundits. They suggested, for example, 23.♞xd8 ♞xd8 24.♙d1, with simplification supposedly beneficial to White. But even then, after 24...♞xd1† 25.♞xd1 a5!, there is no mistaking the threat of ...a5-a4-a3. Of course White would not necessarily have to lose, but he would no longer have very much reason for optimism.

23...♞d4!

An excellent retort! Now 24.♜d5 fails to 24...♞xd2, whereupon White loses material. For example: 25.♜xb4 ♞xe2 26.♜c6† ♜c7 27.♜xe7 ♞xe1 28.♞xe1 ♙d7, and there is no defence against 29...♞e8.

24.♙e3 ♞hd8! 25.♞c1



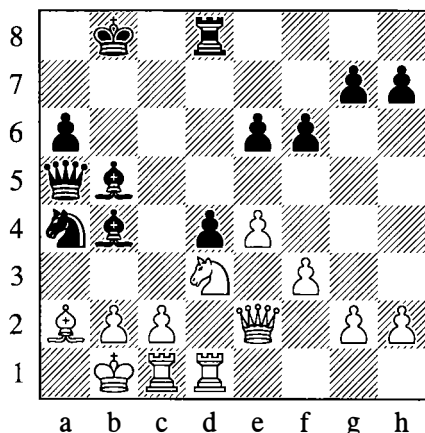
25...♞a5!

The most difficult move in the game. Some purely tactical possibilities were considered: 25...♖c4? 26.♙xc4 ♖xc4 27.♙a2!; or 25...♖c4 26.♙b3, and again 27.♙a2 is coming. Petrosian, however, finds a successful way to employ his favourite device – a positional exchange sacrifice, which enables him to seize the initiative.

26.♙xd4 cxd4 27.♙d1 ♙d7 28.♙f2

On 28.c4?, White would have to reckon with 28...d3.

28...♙b5 29.♙d3 ♙a4 30.♙ed1 ♙b4



Charging with fixed bayonets! The threat of 31...♙c3† is a catastrophe for White.

[Ed. note: Suetin is overrating Black's resources. As Gulko shows, after 31.♙xb4! ♖xb4 32.c4 ♙c6 33.c5!, White's defence holds. A better move for Black was 30...♙a3!. Then 31.c4? would fail to 31...dxc3 32.bxa3 ♙xd3† 33.♖xd3 ♖xd3, while 31.♖d2 or 31.♖e1 would be well answered by 31...♖b6.]

31.c3? ♙xc3! 32.bxc3 ♙xc3† 33.♖xc3 dxc3

Sacrificing a piece, Black has worked up an irresistible attack. White is unable to rid himself of the deadly pin on the a6-f1 diagonal; the threat of 34...♙xd3† is eloquent enough.

34.♙a1 ♖a4 35.♖c1

White cannot get off with surrendering the exchange: 35.♖b1 c2 36.♖xb5† fails to 36...♖xb5 37.♙c1 ♖e5#.

35...♖xd3 36.♖f2 ♖d4 37.♖xd4 ♖xd4 38.♙xe6 ♖a4† 39.♙b1 ♙d3†

White resigned.

0–1

GAME 107

Oleg Romanishin – Tigran Petrosian

Leningrad 1977

Notes by A. Mikhachishin and O. Stetsko

In this game Petrosian created a true masterpiece of positional play.

1.♙f3 ♙f6 2.c4 g6 3.b4 ♙g7 4.♙b2 0–0 5.e3 d6 6.♙e2 e5 7.d3 b6

There is a more natural method of development with 7...♙bd7, but Petrosian is seeking new paths. Since White is adhering to a flank strategy, Black takes the centre under control.

8.♙fd2

White prepares to exchange Black's active bishop. In the event of 8.♙c3 ♙b7 9.0–0 ♙bd7 10.♖c2 c5!?, Black has his full share of the play.

8...♙b7 9.♙f3 ♖c8 10.♙c3 ♙bd7 11.♙xb7 ♖xb7 12.♖f3 ♖xf3 13.gxf3

Accepting doubled pawns is a critical decision. Evidently after 13.♙xf3 White didn't like the continuation 13...a5 14.b5 e4 (or 14...♙c5 15.♙e2 e4) 15.♙xe4 ♙xe4 16.♙xg7 ♙xg7 17.dxe4 ♖ae8 18.♙d2 ♙c5 19.f3 f5, when the weakness of the c4-pawn could cause him problems in the ending.

13...♟fc8

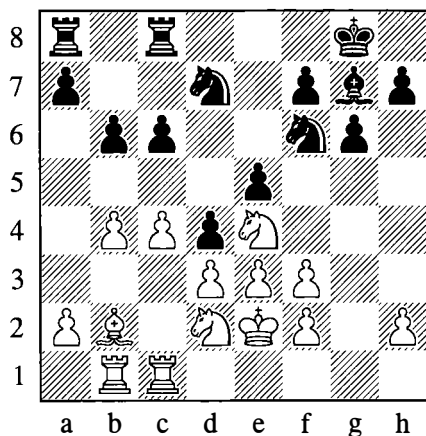
A subtle move. Black is preparing a pawn offensive in the centre, and in anticipation of exchanges he occupies the c-file in good time. As to the other rook, it could be useful on the a-file in the event of a break with ...a7-a5. A good alternative was 13...c6 14.♞e2 d5.

14.♞e2 c6 15.♞hc1?!

A careless move. It was worth counteracting Black's plan by means of 15.b5 cxb5 16.♞xb5 d5 17.cxd5 ♞xd5 18.♞hc1, with an equal game.

15...d5 16.♞ab1?

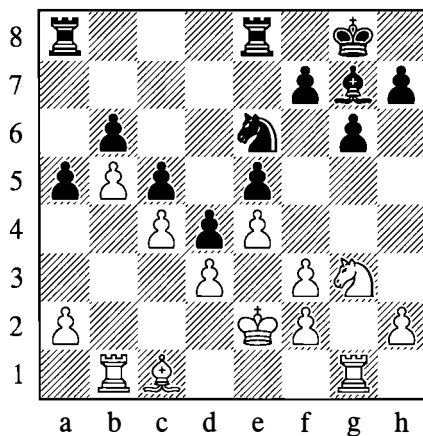
Romanishin overlooks the positional threat that the advance of Black's d-pawn contains. It was essential to play 16.cxd5 cxd5 17.♞b5 (better than 17.♞a4?! d4!, when 18.exd4? fails to 18...♞d5), maintaining the balance.

16...d4! 17.♞ce4**17...a5!**

This is the whole point. Since 18.a3 axb4 19.axb4 ♞a2 would concede the a-file, White is compelled to close the queenside. This enables Black to transfer the play to the other wing, where his prospects are clearly better in view of the doubled f-pawns.

18.b5 c5 19.♞xf6+ ♞xf6 20.♞g1 ♞e8 21.♞f1 ♞d7 22.e4?!

From Black's point of view this is "grist to his mill". Not wishing to concede space, White creates a weakness on f4. He should have kept to waiting tactics: 22.h4 h5 (preventing h4-h5) 23.♞g2 ♞f6 24.♞g3! (24...♞xh4 25.♞xh5) 24...♞h7 25.♞h2.

22...♞f8 23.♞c1 ♞e6 24.♞g3**24...h5!**

A manoeuvre typical of such positions. Black prepares an advantageous exchange of dark-squared bishops, which facilitates access to f4.

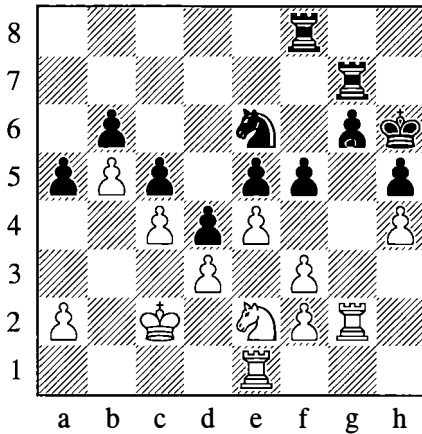
25.♞d1 ♞h7 26.♞e2 ♞h6 27.♞c2 ♞g8 28.♞g2 ♞af8 29.♞xh6 ♞xh6 30.♞e1 ♞g7!

Another of the important devices of positional play. Before carrying out the ...f7-f5 break, Black takes advantage of White's passivity by preparing to double rooks on the f-file in case of an exchange on f5.

31.h4

Here this pawn is weak. White should have stuck to passive tactics with 31.♞d2.

31...f5



32...exf5

On 32...♞eg1, Black opens the f-file himself and breaks through with his rooks to the enemy's rear: 32...fxe4 33.fxe4 ♜f3 (threatening ...♞h3) 34.♞h1 ♞gf7 35.♞hh2 ♞f4 36.♞xf4 ♞7xf4 37.♞d2 ♞g4 38.♞e2 ♞ff4 39.♞xg4 hxg4, with threats of ...♞h5 and ...♞f3, winning the pawn on h4.

32...♞xf5 33.f4

Clearly 33.♞g3 ♞xf3 34.♞xe5 ♞f4 is in Black's favour.

33...♞gf7!

There is no need to hurry. After 33...♞xf4 34.♞xf4 exf4 35.♞e6 White comes to life.

34.♞eg1 ♞f8 35.fxe5 ♞xf2 36.♞d2 ♞7f5 37.♞g5 ♞xg5!

Black isn't striving for immediate material gains; he correctly judges that the advanced white pawns will not run away from him.

38.hxg5†

Black would meet 38.♞xg5 with 38...♞e6 39.♞g1 ♞f4 40.♞e1 ♞g7, making for the e5-pawn.

38...♞g7 39.♞e1 ♞f5 40.♞f1 ♞e6 41.♞xf5

White resigned.

0-1

In the tournaments at Lone Pine, which were organized on the Swiss system, Petrosian took part in 1976 and 1978, and came through without loss. The first time he was victorious, but in the second tournament, with its more impressive list of entries, he overstepped the "draw limit" and had to be content with sharing 6th-10th places.

In the 1978 tournament, an especially memorable game was the one with Portisch, in which Petrosian finally solved the problem of this difficult opponent. This was such an important matter for him that at the start of the following year he wrote an article entitled "The Problem of the Jinx Opponent," published in the *USSR Central Chess Club Bulletin* (1979, No. 2).

"The problem of the jinx opponent is not new in chess. The particularly baneful effect that one player has on another arises suddenly – and if it disappears, it does so just as mysteriously as it appeared in the first place. How are we to explain this competitive incompatibility between two personalities that frequently encounter each other on opposite sides of the chessboard? Perhaps this is a secret with seven seals. Encountering this phenomenon that resembles a natural calamity, every chessplayer tries to solve the problem in his own way.

"Over a long period of years in my chess life, my most difficult opponent was the Hungarian Grandmaster Lajos Portisch. The years passed, we would meet in tournaments that brought success to one of us and not the other, sometimes one and sometimes the other would be placed higher in the final table. But one thing remained unaltered. Every game with Portisch became an ordeal for me. The numerous draws were interspersed with losses. True, the number of losses was not all that great – four in all, during a thirteen-year period – but at times I had been on the brink of defeat, and I had not been able to win a single game.

“When in our Candidates match of 1974 I succeeded in winning against Portisch for the first time in my life, all the events of that game were embellished with a special colouring in my eyes. As I saw it, my play had been very subtle, I had employed a valuable novelty, Portisch had shown doggedness and ingenuity in defence. But later, when the excitement had abated, I came to the conclusion that the game had been perfectly ordinary, and that, at bottom, there had been no struggle in it. And it may well be that I have solved the ‘Portisch problem’ for myself, because now, when I look through the scores of our preceding encounters, I sometimes question whether the names of the players might be the wrong way round.”

GAME 108

Lajos Portisch – Tigran Petrosian

Lone Pine 1978

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♙b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♙d3 d5 6.♘f3 b6 7.0-0 ♙b7

Every time I have faced Portisch, especially when playing Black, I have felt most uncomfortable in the opening. His body language at the board radiates omniscience. Decisions that cost me anguished labour were undoubtedly foreseen by him at home – to judge from his outward expression, at any rate. I would seem to have no opening loophole that Portisch hasn’t anticipated and padlocked in advance, leaving me with a minimum of choice. I have to march in step with him, often against my will.

True, now and again Portisch himself has to solve some relatively little investigated problems over-the-board. My choice of variation in this game was inspired by Spassky’s success in game 14 of his match with Portisch in 1977, where he employed a new move, caught his opponent

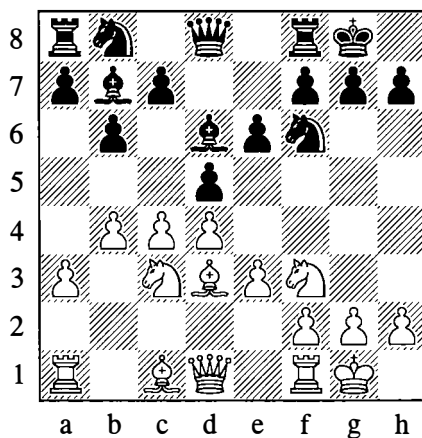
unawares, took up the struggle in a pleasant position, and went on to win.

The system I adopted in the present game was one that I had hardly ever had occasion to play before, and I could assume that at least to some extent it would be a surprise to Portisch. But as the course of the game showed, this was not the case.

8.a3 ♙d6

In the case of 8...♙e7 9.cxd5 exd5 10.b4, Black will have to waste a tempo posting his bishop on d6 and achieving the requisite arrangement of his forces. Admittedly, in the present situation the gain or loss of a tempo plays no special role; but one of the particular things that distinguish strong players from weak ones is that the strong ones not only dislike losing a tempo – they will also go out of their way to gain one, even if no clear benefit from this can be discerned in the immediate future.

9.b4



9...dxc4

“The only way!” Taimanov exclaims, in his book *Nimzowitsch-Indisch bis Katalanisch*, published in Berlin. He maintains that Black’s natural reaction of 9...a5 promises White a plus after 10.c5! (Taimanov’s exclamation

mark) 10...axb4 11.♖a4 ♗e7 12.axb4. To support this, he mentions one single game played quite a while ago – in 1958 – in a USSR Championship semi-final. However, if instead of 11...♗e7 Black plays 11...bxc5 12.dxc5 ♗e7 13.axb4 c6, followed by 14...♖bd7, he has a sturdy centre and not a bad position.

But I suppose there is not much point in spending time discussing the merits of 9...a5, if only because after 10.b5 Black still cannot do without exchanging on c4, leading to the position that is familiar from practice.

10.♗xc4 a5

An essential link in Black's plan, which involves preparation for ...e6-e5. Now, seeing that neither 11.♖b1 nor 11.bxa5 promises anything, White will be all the readier to push his pawn to b5 where it will be holding up two black ones – the b- and c-pawns. If Black tries to get rid of the b5-pawn by playing ...c7-c6, then after an exchange on c6 White will play a3-a4, handing over the functions of the pawn on b5 to the one on a4. This time White will be restraining a different pair – the black a- and b-pawns.

If to this we add that White has an extra pawn in the centre, then on general grounds we might conclude that he had quite an obvious advantage.

A few years ago I devoted some study to this position, because in games where it had occurred, White had not been successful. I didn't believe in the justice of what happened in those games, and attempted to improve White's play. But it was a strange thing: in the course of my analysis, as a rule, White had beautiful positions with assets that were positively striking. Yet as soon as a "blow for blow" scenario began, it emerged that with Black's forces successfully deployed, his piece play could nullify all the attractions of the white position.

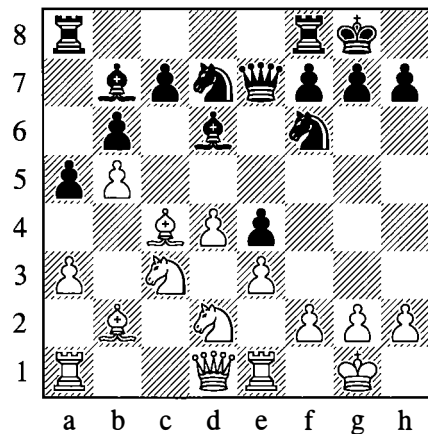
11.b5 ♖bd7 12.♗b2 e5

In his game with Tal in the 1975 Alekhine Memorial Tournament, Spassky continued with 13.a4 here. Tal adhered to a fundamentally different line of play from the present game, stubbornly rejecting the obvious advance of his e-pawn. After 13...♗e7 14.h3 ♖ad8 15.♗e2 ♗fe8 16.♖ad1 exd4? 17.♖xd4, it became clear that 17...♗e5 was an empty threat in view of the simple 18.f4 ♗xe3† 19.♗xe3 ♗xe3 20.♖f5. Therefore, coolly albeit under compulsion, Tal played 17...g6 and held the position fairly easily.

13.♖e1

Portisch made this move very quickly, and it was clear from the way he looked that I had not succeeded in catching him unawares.

13...e4 14.♖d2 ♗e7



15.♗e2!

This move discloses Portisch's scheme. Of course, to anyone with any chess education, the aim of undermining Black's advanced post – his e-pawn – cannot come as a great strategic revelation. But how is this aim to be achieved? If White proceeds straightforwardly with 15.f3, then after 15...exf3 16.♖xf3 ♖e4 Black has the e4-square firmly in his grasp and need not fear anything or anyone, no matter

how White continues! By taking on f3 with his g-pawn, White would be making the position as sharp as possible, but that is all. Though appearing elastic at first sight, his pawns would have little mobility owing to the active placing of his opponent's pieces, and every step forward with them would have to be very carefully considered. An advance of the white f-pawn would lend more force to the bishop on b7. After e3-e4 the firepower of the bishop on d6 would increase. Indeed, the prospect of a knight sortie to h5 and perhaps f4, combined with the inevitable ...♞h4, would put plenty of players off recapturing on f3 with the pawn.

Portisch's idea contains a fair amount of poison. He intends to play f2-f3 and then recapture on f3 with his bishop. After a bishop exchange, his queen will appear on that square. White will constantly keep the e4-square under control, guaranteeing a painless advance of his e-pawn. In that case Black's knights and his remaining bishop will turn out to be badly placed. Black therefore needs to counter f2-f3 in a way that incurs minimal positional damage. The simplest recipe of course would be to support the pawn on e4 with the neighbouring one, after playing 15...♖e8. But that move, alas, would merely be a blunder: 16.♖dxe4 ♗xe4 17.♖xe4, and if 17...♞xe4 then 18.♗f3. Instead with 17...♗xh2† Black can avoid loss of material, but after 18.♗xh2 ♞xe4 19.♗f3 ♞h4† 20.♗g1 the immense positional damage is obvious.

Black's minor pieces are occupying their optimal positions (to use a currently fashionable term), and he only needs to have a think about how to arrange his rooks. I didn't like placing them on e8 and f8, so there was not much of a choice. I would have to station the rooks on d8 and e8, but in which order should I do it? I preferred 15...♞ad8, on two grounds. First, ...♖e8 followed by ...f7-f5 would become an option. Secondly, on 16.f3 Black would have the rather amusing tactical possibility of

16...♖c5. Then, if we make the most obvious moves, there would follow: 17.dxc5 ♗xc5 18.♗f1 exf3 19.gxf3 ♞xe3† 20.♞xe3 ♗xe3† 21.♗h1 ♞xd2, winning for Black.

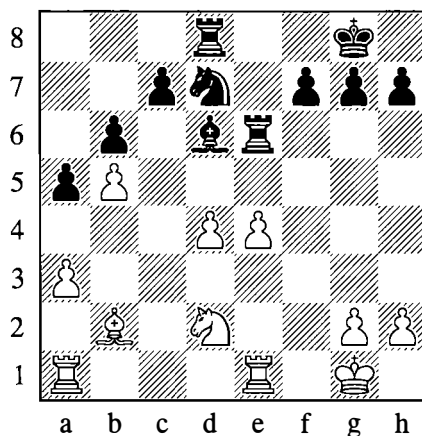
True, if White answers 16...♖c5 with 17.♞c2 exf3 18.♗xf3 ♗xf3 19.dxc5! (there is no danger to Black in 19.♖xf3 ♖ce4 or 19.gxf3 ♖e6) 19...♗xh2† 20.♗xh2 ♖g4† 21.♗g1 (or 21.♗g3), Black's adventure meets with a refutation, but then he wasn't at all compelled to go in for it.

The most amusing thing of all is that at this moment it never crossed my mind that I had just thought up the move which would win the game for me.

15...♞ad8 16.♞c2

Going through the game together afterwards, it emerged that Portisch had avoided the tactical possibilities just mentioned because in his view 16.f3 ♞fe8 17.fxex4 ♖xe4 18.♖dxe4 ♗xe4 19.♖xe4 ♞xe4 20.♗f3 ♞h4 21.g3 ♞g5 didn't promise White any advantage. And he was right!

16...♞fe8 17.f3 exf3 18.♗xf3 ♗xf3 19.♖xf3 ♖e4 20.♖xe4 ♞xe4 21.♞xe4 ♞xe4 22.♖d2 ♞e6 23.e4



The series of moves from the 17th to the 23rd took place virtually without a pause from

either player. This is a clear indication that their assessments of the resulting position were diametrically opposed.

At first sight White's pawn centre, dynamic and ready to advance, together with his seemingly sturdy piece formation, promises him a lasting initiative. Nevertheless such an experienced player as Portisch should have smelt a rat, if only because Black had headed for this position so nonchalantly. He should have, but he did not. Why? No doubt because he was playing an "easy" opponent.

23...♖c5

A little trick: 24.dxc5 is unplayable in view of 24...♙xc5† followed by 25...♞xd2, winning a pawn with an overwhelming position. This places White in a critical situation, in view of the threats of ...♗a4, ...♗d3 and ...♙f4; he must not only go over to defence but must do so in a specially unpleasant atmosphere of sudden trauma – with an abrupt switch from playing for a win to seeking chances of a draw.

In the first place, we must realize that after the obvious 24.d5 ♞e8 (of course not 24...♞e7 on account of 25.e5, and then 25...♗d3 26.exd6 or 25...♞de8 26.♗f3), the threat of ...♗d3 or ...♙f4 leads to the loss of the e-pawn at least.

Moreover 24.e5 blunders a pawn away directly, to 24...♙xe5; while after 24.♞e2 ♗a4 25.♗c4, Black plays 25...♗xb2 26.♗xb2 ♙f8! with a won position.

It would seem that White's best chance is 24.♞e2 ♗a4 and now not 25.♗c4, but 25.d5. Black would then be faced with a choice:

(a) He could take the opportunity to play for an attack with 25...♙xc5† 26.♗f1 (26.♗h1 ♞xd5) 26...♞h6 27.♙e5 ♞e8 28.♙xc7 ♗c3 29.♞e1 ♞f6† 30.♗f3 ♗xe4 (threatening mate on d2). Then on 31.♞ad1 he would go over to prosaic play with 31...♙xa3. Alternatively, in this variation he could settle for 29...♗xb5 and reconcile himself to the scattered state of his pieces after 30.♙g3 ♗xa3.

(b) He could seek a clear advantage in the position after 25...♞e7 26.♙d4 ♙f4. In this case, though, following the natural 27.♞ae1 ♙xd2 28.♞xd2 ♞xd5 29.exd5 ♞xe1† 30.♗f2 ♞c1 31.d6 cxd6 32.♙xb6 ♗xb6 33.♞xd6, White should draw without much trouble.

However that might be, in all these lines Black would be confronted with one of the most difficult problems in a chess game – that of choosing the right continuation. After the move White played, Black had *no* choice. He was forced to make the move that was practically dictated to him by his opponent; he had to take the pawn, without thinking about the consequences.

24.♗c4 ♗xe4

The result of the game is a foregone conclusion. Black has picked up a crucial pawn without making any concession. The rest, as they say, is a matter of technique.

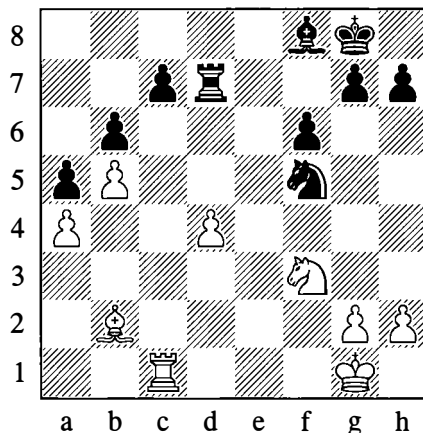
25.♞ac1 ♙f8!

An essential move! White must be denied the chance to utilize the c-file after an exchange on d6.

26.♗e5 ♗d6 27.a4 f6 28.♗f3

Nor is 28.♗c6 any better – on that square the knight would merely look pretty.

28...♞xe1† 29.♗xe1 ♞d7 30.♗f3 ♗f5



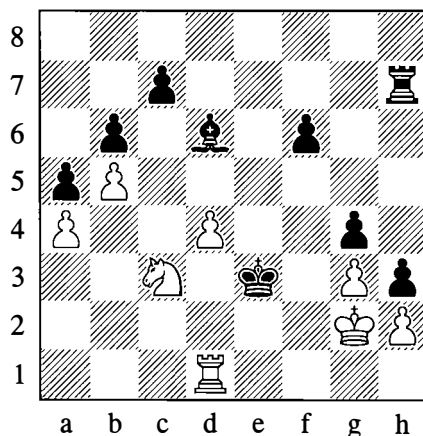
Black gradually arranges his forces in the ideal manner.

On d6 the bishop will not only free the rook from the duty of guarding the c-file; it will also direct its fire against the kingside, where Black has an extra pawn. The knight is excellently placed on f5, and in a few moves' time it will cross over to an equally good post on d5. By advancing his kingside pawns Black will cramp his opponent's position to the maximum; then, depending on circumstances, he will break into the enemy camp with some piece or pieces, and make for the defenceless pawns.

In the game, the black king was destined to play that distinguished role.

31.♔f2 h5 32.♖c2 g5 33.♖c4 ♔d6 34.g3
 ♕f7 35.♘g1 ♘e7 36.♘e2 ♘d5 37.♙c1
 ♕e6 38.♖c2 ♕f5 39.♕f3 g4† 40.♕f2 ♖h7
 41.♗d2 h4 42.♕g2 ♕e4 43.♗d1 ♘e3†

44.♗xe3 ♕xe3 45.♘c3 h3†



White resigned. After the king moves, 46...♖h5 completes the work of paralysing the white position.

0-1

Chapter 16

1979-1982

In the summer of 1979, Petrosian celebrated his 50th birthday – a happy occasion (a jubilee!), and at the same time always a slightly sad one: say what you will, the greater part of your life has already been lived. But in the many interviews Tigran had to give at that time, there was no sadness; there *was* the calm wisdom of a man who has experienced much and come to know much. Essentially, everything that Petrosian wished to say to lovers of chess on that festive day went into his article “A Few Words on My Birthday”. But writing on your own, which means answering only your own questions, is one thing; you show yourself in quite a different light when you have to answer questions put by someone else. Therefore to give the “full picture”, we are first reproducing Petrosian’s article and then the interview he gave to Viktor Khenkin, a correspondent of the weekly 64.

Tigran Petrosian: A Few Words on My Birthday

People celebrating a jubilee are usually asked what path they would choose if they had the chance to start all over again. I won’t conceal the fact that from my childhood years the vocation of an orchestra conductor had impressed me. I love music; my love for it has lasted throughout my life. In addition I love books; they have always been my dear companions. But then I also love sport, especially team sports – football and hockey. What attracts me about sport is not so much the spectacle as the clash of human characters. And as to other things that I love...

Yes, in my life I have had many keen interests, but they have all receded into the background as soon as chess has been involved. I am indebted to chess for everything I have achieved in my 50 years. Thanks to chess I have travelled the whole world, acquainted myself with other countries and their cultures, and made many friends. Thanks to chess I have known the delight of creativity, and – why not say it? – stepped into the limelight of fame. But your greatest happiness, your greatest reward, is when your own joy becomes the joy of your family, your friends, your nation – a collective joy. And that happiness I have experienced. I experienced it to the full when I acquired the title of World Champion, for victory in a match for the chess crown is the climax of a player’s life.

Coming back to the question I asked myself, here is my answer. If I were starting my life all over again, I would once again become a chessplayer. Of course I would try to extract the lessons from the past, and I would avoid repeating many of my mistakes. But alas, it is not given to anyone to do this. My path as a competitor has not been strewn with roses, there have been thorns as well – in a fair quantity, I am afraid.

I learnt chess in my childhood, and at first I was content with the pleasures that the game itself

gave me. Soon, however, chess took complete possession of me and became the affair of my life, although generally speaking I was not distinguished by any special sporting ambition – until something happened which, as they say, stung me to the quick.

This was in 1956. The international Alekhine Memorial Tournament was taking place in Moscow. As usual a special bulletin was produced, and I was entrusted with writing a survey of one of the rounds. In that round Botvinnik and Gligoric had concluded peace as early as move twelve. It was at that time that short draws had featured among my own games, and now and again I had been censured for it. In my report on the round, I expressed the thought that if Botvinnik himself, whose view of chess as a struggle was widely known, could permit himself a respite, then the matter was not as simple as all that. In short, I came out in defence of that miniature draw. All my life I was to remember how Peter Romanovsky, who on some previous occasions had praised me, this time wrote: “Petrosian’s maxims have nothing in common with the interests of the Soviet school of chess.”

In that same year, the magazine *Chess in the USSR* published an article that analysed the performances of the contestants in the Amsterdam Candidates Tournament. I had not played too badly in that event; out of ten participants in all, I had shared 3rd-7th places. The article, however, discussed the creative achievements of nine Grandmasters only – from the tournament winner Vasily Smyslov, to Hermann Pilnik who came at the foot of the final table. I received no mention at all, just as if I had never played in the tournament.

I must admit, this stung me so badly that I lost my head and began thinking seriously about whether to give chess up.

One day I was visited by a journalist friend and shared my sorrows and doubts with him.

“What do they blame you for?” he asked.

“They blame me for my draws, my style, everything!”

“Very well then,” he said. “Let’s suppose you *do* give up chess. What do you prove by it? They’ll think, ‘he can’t play, he draws his games, that’s why he’s quitting.’ If you want to prove something, you must play and win.”

I cannot say that after this very conversation I decided to become World Champion and did so seven years later. But the conversation was not without its effect on me; my desire to prove myself was stimulated. At that time I frequently took part in events in Moscow and in Armenia, and I saw that many people were worried about my play and results. This aroused my fighting spirit, my urge to reach the highest competitive goals. I decided that the title of World Champion would be the fitting acknowledgement that I had achieved something in chess.

Looking back, I rarely recall my woes and grievances. Compared with the delights that chess so generously gave and still gives me, such things were mere trifles. I have recounted one of the difficult episodes from my biography purely in order to caution today’s critics. Of course, criticism of young chessplayers is necessary. It is undoubtedly of use to them. But criticism ought to be tactful, benevolent, thoughtful. Being a chess “professor” is not enough; it is essential to understand the players themselves.

Chess has a complicated history of development behind it, and still continues to evolve – so rapidly that yesterday’s judgements appear hopelessly outdated today. But chess is played by people, and it is people who define its tendencies and schools.

The most noticeable tendency in present-day chess is that the element of sport predominates over creativity. The fact that today the result of a game is valued more highly than its content is

our misfortune, which an uncritical public applauds. I do not think that a player who genuinely loves chess derives pleasure merely from the number of points he has scored, however impressive that number may be. I will not speak of myself, but to the masters of the older generation, from whose play we learnt, the aesthetic side of chess was paramount. They too wanted to be victorious, but they didn't think only about winning the game; they thought about doing so in a worthy manner.

When I set out on my life's journey, there were considerably fewer chessplayers than there are today. No one took up chess for the sake of getting on in life. Nowadays chess has become a highly popular occupation, resulting not only in the devaluation of titles but in professionalism of a none too estimable kind. The game is going through a difficult period. On the one hand it has risen to an extremely high level; on the other hand it has engendered an attitude of cold practicality. The tastes of the chess public at large need educating. They must be taught to distinguish true art from its surrogate, creativity from hack-work.

Lasker wrote in his manual that anyone could become a player of the First Category after roughly 150 hours of chess study. Veterans know that our pre-war First Category players would be at least masters today. What follows from this? It follows that someone of average abilities can come along and turn himself into a master within a year or two. Of course Lasker was expressing his thought in a somewhat exaggerated form, but the fact remains that in our day knowledge and memory are acquiring more and more significance. Very many players are not so much thinking creatively as recollecting and reproducing familiar examples.

Our chess ancestors proceeded by feel, like blind men. When I look through games played by the old masters, even (let us say) by such as Morphy, I have the impression that they saw the chessboard as if through a haze. The further any pieces were from the crucial sector of the battle, the thicker was the darkness in which they were shrouded. But where a skirmish broke out, the fog would lift and the great masters of the past would start performing just as skilfully as we do today.

The present-day master views chess differently. He sees and takes account of everything; for him, the whole board is in play. If, say, he is conducting an attack on the kingside, then with one eye he has to cast sideways glances at the other side of the board. Suppose for instance I am attacking the enemy king, but suddenly begin to have doubts about whether the attack will succeed. Wouldn't it be better to push that little pawn quietly from a3 to a4 and take control of the b5-point? Then perhaps in about thirty moves' time my king will reach that square, and the endgame will prove to be won. Such doubts were unknown to our forebears; they simply wouldn't see that little pawn, they wouldn't take notice of it. They didn't realize that that too was a possible way of playing.

Now everyone knows everything. It has all been written about, in thousands of books and magazines. Does that mean there is nothing more to be invented in chess? Certainly not!

A chessplayer's strength is held to depend, first and foremost, on his power of evaluation. There is such a thing as a routine evaluation of a position. This unsophisticated art easily lends itself to study, and you can find a great many players who are capable of it. Suppose that together with my opponent I am analysing a game that has just finished. He says to me, "White is better – he has a strong knight on e5." I too understand that on e5 there is a strong knight, but at the same time I give attention to other features of the position, such as the weakness of the pawn on b2 which may come under unpleasant pressure within a few moves. Gradually I come to the conclusion

that the centralized white knight is little more than a “paper tiger”, and that Black’s position is not at all worse.

In evaluating a position, a chessplayer has to allow for seemingly insignificant nuances. The position on the board may appear completely ordinary, and yet something, somewhere, may be very slightly “out of order” – and this something may make possible a decision that would never even enter the head of a player of average abilities. Deep insight into the secrets of the position is the sign of genuine strength.

But who is stronger than a strong player? A talented player.

In chess as in any other activity, much depends on a person’s aptitudes. It is sometimes said that talent is a form of deviation from the norm. On the other hand, there exists a body of opinion which holds that all people are talented in their own way – it is just that by no means all of them discover their vocation in life. I fancy a time will come when so-called “untalented” people will be thought of as the departure from the norm, while the talented ones will start to be assigned to their professions on the basis of early identification of their aptitudes. Then chess will be replenished with new geniuses.

What chess talent is, and how it comes to light – that is the subject for a broad discussion in which there remains some unclarity. I can only suggest what distinguishes a talented chessplayer from a merely strong one. A strong player knows all the rules and laws of the game. A talented player knows everything that the strong one knows, but he also sees the exceptions to the rules. And then the *great* chess talents (let us call them geniuses) gradually convert these exceptions into new laws. And so on *ad infinitum* – because the game of chess is inexhaustible.

Viktor Khenkin: Interview with Tigran Petrosian to Mark His Fiftieth Birthday

“It’s a widely held opinion that a long chess life is something achieved only by those players who base their play not on the calculation of concrete variations but on their understanding of the position. Put more briefly, their conduct of the struggle flows from general positional considerations. That method allows them to expend less energy and consequently to endure the tension of a tournament game better. Is this true?”

“That isn’t a view I share. Positional understanding, to be sure, is a sign of a chessplayer’s great practical strength. But with the years, even this quality gets blunted. You need to keep on stimulating and refreshing it, in other words you have to work at your chess, you have to engage in analysis.

“But you won’t get far with positional understanding alone. Without keen tactical vision you have no chance of success. However, with age, your capacity for play based on calculation declines considerably, and you have to make up for that failing somehow. Why did Botvinnik’s level of fighting strength remain so high for so long? Because he was able to recognize this irreversible process before others did, and he ‘re-programmed’ himself. By what means? By doing what I do today.

“People never placed me in the category of ‘chess playing calculators’, and yet in my youth I examined an enormous number of variations during play. I calculated them quite well, quite quickly and quite a long way ahead. I am still capable of calculating over long distances and doing it well, only not for five hours at a stretch. These days, switching my ‘calculating machine’ to full power is something I can only do once or twice in the course of a game. For that reason I try

to choose the kind of opening systems and methods of building up my game that don't require me to examine variations move by move. But if that requirement does suddenly arise at critical moments of the struggle, I cope with it every bit as well as I used to.

"Nevertheless, to play chess for a long time and well, you cannot rely on experience and knowledge – you have to put everything you have into it. For myself, I know very well what it means to play for all you're worth and what it means to go easy on yourself.

"I rarely see young chessplayers who are tired after a game. No, they don't go easy on themselves, it's just that they don't know how to exert themselves. Like some footballers, they go back to the dressing room in dry shirts.

"Back in our day, in order to progress and make a name for yourself, it was essential to perform well in the national championships and to fight for the world crown. This demanded immense exertions. I remember how in 1961, in the USSR Championship, after a crucial win in time trouble, I couldn't reconstruct the game score: my hands were shaking. Ever since then I've kept a tranquillizer on me. I remember how in 1949, in another Soviet Championship, Semyon Furman was aiming for the Grandmaster norm, but to reach it he needed to beat Boleslavsky in the last round with Black! And he did. But when he got back to his hotel room, blood gushed from his nose.

"As I see it, young players haven't learnt to put their heart and soul into the struggle because today's chess life doesn't compel them to. Many of them are perfectly content with easy victories in foreign tournaments. As for the prestigious but exhausting battles for the World Championship – well, as Arkady Raikin puts it: 'Let the camel carry the load, *he's* the discoverer, he's the ship of the desert.' Translated into chess parlance, this means: '*He's* Karpov, he's Tal, he's Petrosian...'

"I'm sorry for the young players. They don't put everything into chess that they are capable of, and they don't get out of it all that they could."

"Chess has been travelling about the world for one and a half thousand years now, gaining new adherents all the time. It's as if humanity's immemorial dream of harmony is embodied in this wonderful blend of science, art and sport. However, every chessplayer places the emphasis on one of these three elements. What do you yourself think that chess is?"

"A well-known figure in Dutch chess, H. Slavikord, once said to me: 'It's possible to live without poetry or without music, but you cannot live without art. It's also possible to survive without chess, but then chess is an art too.'

"Is chess an art? Yes it is. How else are we to define a form of activity in which human beings experience the most profound aesthetic delight? How else are we to assess the result of someone's creative effort that gives inward pleasure to others?"

"In this sense chess can be compared to music – but serious music. A light, rhythmical song is comprehensible to anyone. But to derive joy and delight from serious music, you need a definite musical culture. So it is with chess. To derive pleasure from the game (not from winning but from the creative process itself, and from appreciating the achievements of other players), special training is needed, in other words an appropriate level of skill. The need for such training quite often scares people off chess, just as it scares them off serious music.

"I have come a long way in chess. And although it would be difficult to count me among the priests of chess art, either by reason of my style or my by approach to the game, or, finally, by my results – nevertheless I consider chess to be an art first and foremost. It is precisely this quality of our game that draws so many people into the ranks of its adherents."

“Every World Champion has left an indelible mark on the history of chess. Books and studies are devoted to him, his games are subjected to the most painstaking analysis. What place do you yourself occupy within that constellation of names?”

“Whether this or that player will go down in history depends not just on his results but on his creative achievement. To me, for example, it doesn’t matter whether a player was World Champion or not. The main thing is that he should have left some outstanding games behind him. Was enough written about Nimzowitsch in his own time? But today, many well-known players (including for instance Larsen and myself) call themselves his followers. Bronstein didn’t become World Champion either, but his games are none the worse for that.

“For me, of course, it would be pleasant to see a book about myself in my own lifetime. But there isn’t one, and it doesn’t distress me. If I have succeeded in creating something in chess, then it cannot possibly be erased. A time will come, there’ll be analysts and historians and researchers who will put everything in its proper order and define my place in the history of chess. But if I imagined that fifty years after my death (let us say), no one would be interested in my games and achievements, I’d feel very sore now.”

“Every new approach to chess demands to be publicized. All great masters have endeavoured to elucidate their chess credo, to present their games for the readers to judge. How come you yourself have not written a single book?”

“After the match with Botvinnik in 1963, I made a big mistake by not publishing a book without delay. But the funny thing is this: I sat down to work at once and *did* annotate 17 of the 22 match games. However, the ‘sweet life’ of a Champion began: I went here and I went there, I made appearances, I played... That was negligence on my part. But I hope there’s still a long life ahead of me and I’ll be able to realize my long-standing dream – that of annotating around 70 games from all three of the World Championship matches I played in. A book is a very serious thing. I don’t like literary jottings, I shall have to record everything point by point – and that requires a huge amount of time.”

“‘Nothing under the sun is eternal,’ as the saying goes. The title of ‘chess king’ is no more permanent than anything else. At all times new heroes have appeared and deposed the previous champions. What are a champion’s feelings after he loses his title?”

“Extremely unpleasant. It isn’t so simple to explain. But generally, when someone’s at the zenith of his fame, and suddenly that fame subsides, he sees how the attitude of people around him changes. A feeling of vexation and resentment against people arises. Of course I understood that the title of World Champion wasn’t granted in perpetuity, but all the same, to this day I consider that I didn’t have to lose the match in 1969 against Spassky. I wasn’t then inferior to him in chess terms. Then again, Spassky too would have felt mortified if he hadn’t won that second match against me. But chess is a struggle. If there had been a third match I might have won it, then Spassky might have won the fourth, and so on indefinitely.

“Perhaps the most annoying thing – though a pure coincidence, of course – was that I lost the title of World Champion on my birthday, and not just any birthday, but my fortieth! Seriously though, winning two such matches as the one against Botvinnik in 1963 and the one against Spassky in 1966 is a fully adequate justification for living the life of a chessplayer...”

“High-level chess requires psychological stability and mental balance. Relations within a player’s family have no small role to play here. What qualities does the wife of a World Champion have to have?”

“I’ve been lucky in this life. My wife Rona has relieved me of practically all family worries. I can’t say I haven’t concerned myself with my sons (there are two of them); I’ve tried to take a hand in their upbringing, I’ve been involved with their school affairs and other things. But generally speaking, all the domestic burdens have been laid on my wife’s shoulders.

“In our home there’s always been a friendly, warm-hearted atmosphere. The family has lived by my joys and sorrows. I’m a fairly quick-tempered person, and often they’ve just had to be patient with me. But my wife hasn’t been short of patience. I’m eternally grateful to her. A large part of my success in chess is down to her.”

* * *

In 1979, in his final Candidates cycle, Petrosian once again had to start from the Interzonal. When the well-known chess journalist Yuri Vasiliev asked him about his chances, the ex-World Champion was in no doubt of the answer:

“I think that both Interzonal Tournaments will be won by ‘old men’. As I see it, of the six tickets to the Candidates matches, the young players can count on no more than two! I consider I have chances to be one of the prizewinning trio. We will fight! Everything depends on how we feel.”

“What, the ‘old men’ are still strong and the young ones are still weak?”

“If we’re holding our ground, that means they *are* still weak. I know the young Grandmasters may take offence at me for this, but I have to say I have an easy time playing against them – it’s like reading an open book.”

The maestro’s prophecy came true. In the Rio de Janeiro Interzonal, Petrosian shared 1st-3rd places with Portisch and Huebner, while in the Riga tournament Tal was the clear favourite, finishing 2½ points ahead of Polugaevsky. The third qualifier from Riga was the 28-year-old Ribli.

Petrosian’s level of play was rated highly by Mark Taimanov, his rival of many years, in an article surveying the prospects for the 1980 Candidates quarter-final matches:

“Petrosian’s longevity as a player arouses admiration and a feeling of benign jealousy. In his biography we can follow virtually the whole post-war history of the struggle for the World Championship. Of the ten Candidates cycles conducted under the FIDE system, Petrosian has participated in seven, missing two of them for the good reason that he was World Champion for six years. After losing the title he did not lose faith in his powers, and he has solidly maintained his position among the Candidates. The fact that Petrosian has no disciples, as other World Champions have had, may seem surprising. But the originality of his chess gift is such that no one at all has succeeded in imitating his style. Such positional intuition, such a feeling for danger, is something you have to be born with!”

In the 1980 Candidates cycle, the luck of the draw was once again unkind to Petrosian: again his opponent in the quarter-final match was Korchnoi. Once more Petrosian failed to solve the problem of this difficult opponent, although the struggle, which took place in Velden, was conducted very stubbornly. The series of draws was punctuated by losses, and the match finished 3½:5½ from Petrosian’s perspective. (+0 –2 =7). This was the last time Petrosian took part in a World Championship Candidates cycle. Running ahead, we may say that in the 1982 Interzonal Tournament in Las Palmas, he had to settle for sharing 4th-5th places.

Petrosian also failed for the first time to make a “plus score” for the USSR in a team tournament. In the 1980 European Team Championship, playing on third board, he settled for five draws. In international tournaments of smaller format, however, Petrosian was on top form as before. In an event with contestants of various strengths, the important thing when accumulating points is not to lose any games – which accords with Petrosian’s approach. At Las Palmas and Vrbas he shared 1st-3rd and 2nd-4th places respectively, and he convincingly won the tournament at Bar.

In the Moscow “Tournament of Stars” in 1981, all the world’s strongest chessplayers with few exceptions were assembled. It is therefore easy to understand both the intensity of the tournament struggle and the uncommon bunching of the final scores. Petrosian’s share of 9th-10th places, with two losses and a solitary win, was not what you would call a success. On the other hand he did succeed in defeating the rapidly advancing Kasparov (who shared 2nd-4th places, behind Karpov).

In Lev Polugaevsky’s words:

“When you are playing in a tournament and see it from the inside, you naturally notice many things that escape the spectators sitting in the hall. One reason why it is easy for me to talk about the participants in the Moscow contest is that I have faced each one of them across the chessboard several times...

“The ex-World Champion’s result must of course be seen as a failure. This is not the kind of result he is used to; here he ended up with a ‘minus’ score. At first Petrosian played perfectly well, but evidently losing his game against me made a psychological impact on him, and afterwards he was unable to exploit several favourable situations. For example in his game with Beliavsky, Petrosian obtained a splendid position but didn’t undertake any active operations at all, and after the adjournment he even went on to lose. It seems this was no accident. Recently the ex-World Champion has started limiting his possibilities in the chess struggle too severely.

“His game with Kasparov shows that when he has nowhere to retreat to, when he is forced onto the ropes, Petrosian gives superb demonstrations of active defence, active play. But when nothing threatens him, he has no aspirations of his own; he solves his problems passively, and at bottom he doesn’t even want to solve them; he doesn’t take active decisions even when the fifth hour of play is approaching; he continues to play half-heartedly so to speak, and sometimes suffers badly for it.”

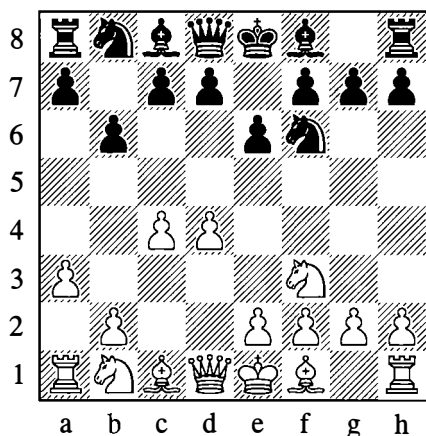
GAME 109

Garry Kasparov – Tigran Petrosian

Moscow 1981

Notes by Jacob Aagaard

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.a3



This variation bears Petrosian's name, but in the early 1980s he was facing it more often with Black, after Kasparov had popularized it.

4...♟b7 5.♞c3 d5 6.cxd5 ♞xd5 7.e3

This is what they played in the 1980s. Nowadays it is considered rather harmless.

These days White aims to play e2-e4 in one go, starting with 7.♞c2. Still, Black seems to have adequate counterplay and theory has moved on in different directions; at least for the time being.

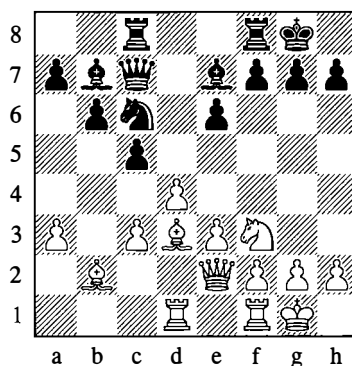
7...♟e7

This looks quite natural, but after Adorjan came up with 7...g6 the popularity of the white system slowly dwindled.

Also 7...♞xc3 8.bxc3 ♟d6 looks better than the text move, which is a little passive.

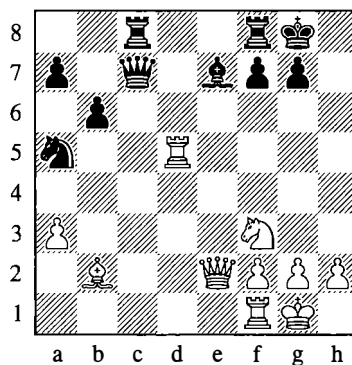
8.♟b5† c6 9.♟d3 ♞xc3 10.bxc3 c5 11.0-0 0-0

Kasparov criticizes this in *My Great Predecessors*, but his suggestion of 11...♞c6 12.♟b2 ♞c8 13.♞e2 0-0 14.♞ad1 ♞c7, as Polugaevsky played in the same tournament against Portisch, feels dated.



That game continued 15.e4 ♞a5 16.h3, after which a draw was agreed.

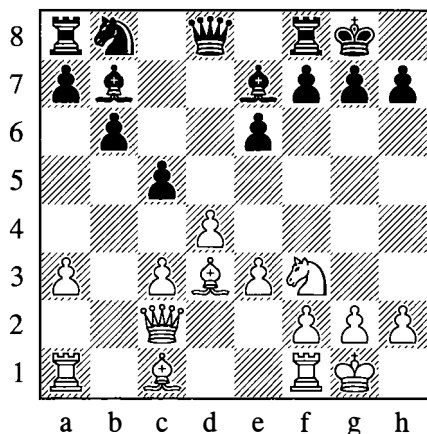
However, a few years later White showed the path forward: 15.c4! Preparing d4-d5. 15...cxd4? 16.exd4 ♞a5 It seems that Black has prevented the advance in the centre, but it is all pretence. 17.d5! exd5 18.cxd5 ♟xd5 19.♟xh7† ♞xh7 20.♞xd5 ♟g8



21.♟xg7!! ♟xg7 22.♞e5 ♞fd8 23.♞g4† ♟f8 24.♞f5 f6 25.♞d7† ♞xd7 26.♞xd7 ♞c5 27.♞h7 ♞c7 28.♞h8† ♟f7 29.♞d3 ♞c4 30.♞fd1 ♞e5 31.♞h7† ♟e6 32.♞g8† ♟f5 33.g4† ♟f4 34.♞d4† ♟f3 35.♞b3† ♞c3 36.♞d5† ♟e2 37.♞e4† 1-0 Kasparov – Portisch, Niksic 1983.

Instead of 14...♞c7, Black could play 14...cxd4 15.cxd4 ♟f6 16.e4 ♞a5, when he is not doing too badly, though I would still not recommend it.

12.♞c2



12...g6?!

This is the move I do not like. The weakening of the dark squares and the possibility of creating further weaknesses with h4-h5 seems to be a serious liability for Black, in light of the two games Petrosian had with it in this tournament.

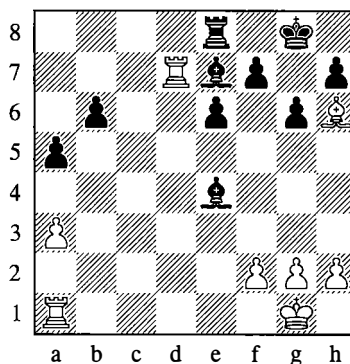
The modern treatment of this position would be 12...h6! in order to meet 13.e4 with 13...♖c8 14.♗e2 ♕a6 to take the sting out of White's attack on the b1-h7 diagonal. White's score is far from impressive from this position.

13.e4 ♘c6

13...♗c7 14.♗e2 ♜d8 15.h4 ♘c6 16.♕e3 ♕f6 17.e5 ♕g7 18.h5± proved to be very dangerous for Black in Polugaevsky – Petrosian, Moscow 1981. With a simple attack consisting of ♘g5 and ♗g4-h4, White managed to break through and force deadly concessions from which Black never recovered. White won on move 46.

14.♕h6 ♜e8 15.♜fd1 ♗c7

It is interesting that Petrosian, the great ambassador for the exchange sacrifice, did not play one here. Black could have forced an easily defendable position with: 15...cxd4 16.cxd4 ♘xd4! 17.♘xd4 ♗xd4 18.♕b5 ♗xe4 19.♗xe4 ♕xe4 20.♕xe8 ♜xe8 21.♜d7 a5



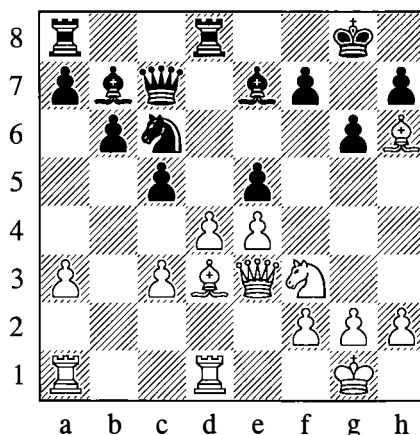
White will no doubt win a pawn on the queenside, but only with the total elimination of the queenside pawns. Still, it is a very passive path to go down, playing only for two results. Although often happy to take a defender's role, Petrosian was probably not ready to give up on the idea of winning the game this early on.

16.♗e2 ♜ed8

Showing Petrosian's great sense of prophylaxis. After the seemingly "normal" 16...♜ad8, White can play 17.♕b5! forcing Black to be careful.

17.♗e3 e5

Preventing White from playing e4-e5 to set up a dangerous attack on the kingside. On the other hand, White gets a passed pawn in the centre.



18.d5

Kasparov spent more than an hour calculating 18.♙c4 exd4 19.cxd4 cxd4 20.♙xf7+ ♖xf7 21.♜b3+ ♕e8, though there is no attack to be found here, as he eventually accepted. He rightly considered this a great loss of time that he needed elsewhere later on.

18...♘a5 19.c4 ♘b3 20.♞a2

White has been rather successful out of the opening. It is easier to create an attack on the sparsely populated kingside than it is to create counterplay on the queenside.

20...f6

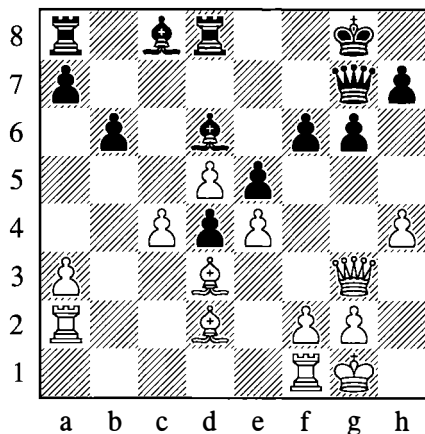
Petrosian thinks prophylactically. White might meet 20...♙c8 with 21.♘d2 ♘d4 22.f4, when ...f6 would be a good move to have made already.

21.h4!

However, ...f6 also weakens the kingside further, which Kasparov is not slow to exploit.

21...♙c8 22.♞b1 ♘d4 23.♘xd4 cxd4 24.♜g3 ♙f8 25.♙d2

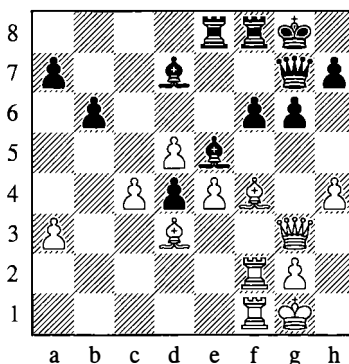
Exchanging the bishop might have been just as good.

25...♙d6 26.♞f1 ♜g7**27.a4?!**

Petrosian comments: “A major inaccuracy. White shouldn’t have permitted himself such a serious weakening of his queenside.”

I find this a bit harsh and, as taking the pawn later on proved to be erroneous, it can easily be questioned.

27.f4! would have given Black questions to answer. The most natural moves are probably 27...♙d7 28.fxe5 ♙xe5 29.♙f4 ♞f8 30.♞af2 ♞ae8, where it seems that Black is holding everything together (“with a solid defence” – Kasparov). But things are not as they seem.



White can play 31.♙xe5, when 31...♞xe5 fails to 32.♞f3! and 33.♜f2. However, this is still preferable to 31...fxe5, which fails entirely to 32.c5!!, when the bishop is activated with deadly force: 32...bxc5 33.♙c4 and Black is going under.

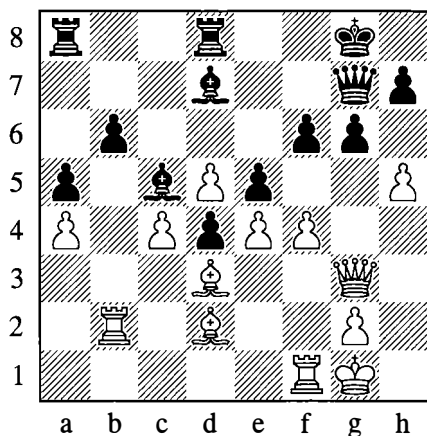
This is of course not forced (though it is what Kasparov relied on in *My Great Predecessors*), but it shows the pressure Black is under and how deep he would have to dig in his prophylactic mind to find a strong defence.

27...a5 28.♞b2 ♙c5 29.f4 ♙d7

According to Petrosian, “29...h6! was much stronger. For example: 30.h5 g5 31.fxg5 fxg5 32.♘h1 ♞f8 33.♙e2, and now an exchange sacrifice with 33...♞f4! is already perfectly possible.”

This is true and 30.h5 looks like a dreadful mistake. But why give up the exchange? All for a reputation? If Black exchanges on f1 and plays ...♗d7, he is completely dominating without any material investment.

30.h5



30...♗xa4?

This is the true mistake. Petrosian must have underestimated the power of White's attack.

30...gxh5! was the right reply. I assume that Petrosian looked at 31.♖h4 ♗g4 (31...♗xa4!? is possible here, with unclear play) 32.fxe5 fxe5 33.♗g5 ♖f8 34.♗f6 and rejected the line for Black. But after 34...♖h6 35.♖bf2 ♖ae8 his position is just fine.

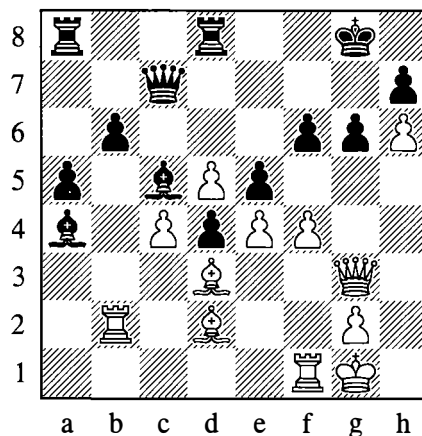
Or maybe Petrosian wanted to win the game and decided to chance it? If so, he was successful, but also a bit lucky!

31.h6!

Pointing out that the queen has nowhere comfortable to go to.

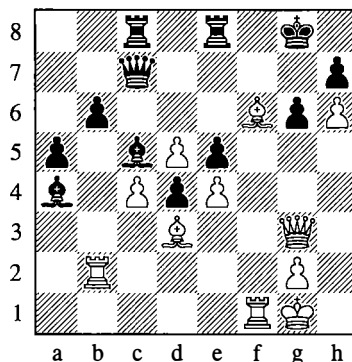
31...♖c7

31...♖e7 32.fxe5 ♖xe5 33.♗f4 ♖e7 34.e5 and Black's position is collapsing.



32.f5?

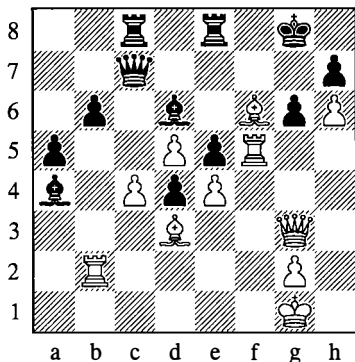
[Ed. note: Petrosian tells us, "I also examined 32.fxe5 fxe5 33.♗g5 ♖e8 34.♗f6 ♖ac8



35.♖f5 ♗d6 36.c5! bxc5 37.♗c4!. A most amusing position – Black is completely helpless against the threat of 38.♖xe5 ♖xe5 39.♗xe5 ♗xe5 40.d6! and 41.♖xe5."]

32.fxe5! fxe5 33.♗g5 ♖e8 34.♗f6 ♖ac8 Petrosian's variation has a few holes, which it is easy to say here thirty-five years later. First of all, 35.♖bf2 is stronger, bringing the second rook into the attack. Black cannot resist the pressure for long.

After 35.♖f5 Black can play 35...♗f8!, which will far from solve all problems, but will offer some resistance. For example: 35...♗d6?!

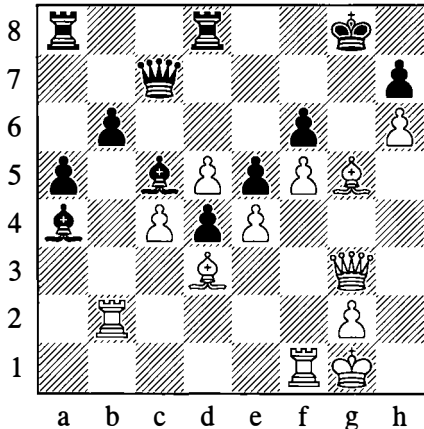


36.c5 is a very beautiful move, leading to a winning attack. But also strong is 36.♖g5 ♗f7 37.♕g7! and Black cannot defend g6 for long.

32...g5

Clearly Petrosian's intention, as after 32...♗f7 33.fxg6 there is no good way to recapture.

33.♕xg5!



Without this move White would simply be dead lost so there is little to think about.

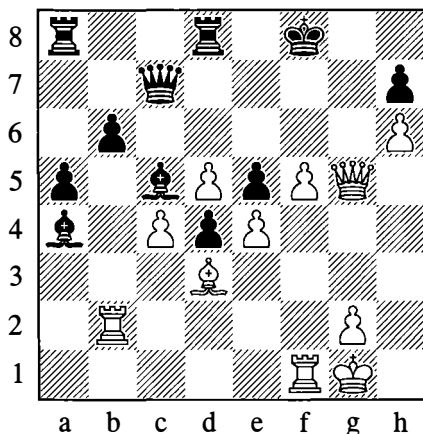
33...fxg5?

An almost suicidal decision.

33...♔f7! was the logical choice. Kasparov says that he would play 34.♕d2 and keep his positional advantage. I am not sure it is much of an advantage, but certainly it is Black who has questions to answer.

A curious variation goes: 34.♕xf6!? ♔xf6 35.♖a1, where Petrosian would probably have found it easy to return the piece with 35...♖g8!! (35...♕e8?! 36.♖f2 ♖d7 37.♖f3 looks dangerous for Black, although things are not entirely clear at this point) 36.♗h4† ♖g5 37.♖xa4 ♖ag8 Black seems solid; a draw is likely.

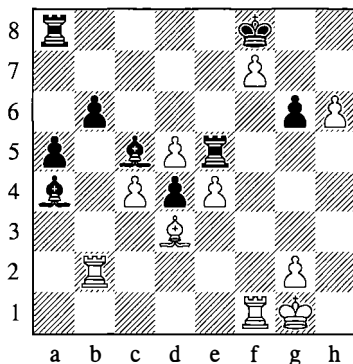
34.♗xg5† ♔f8



35.♗f6??

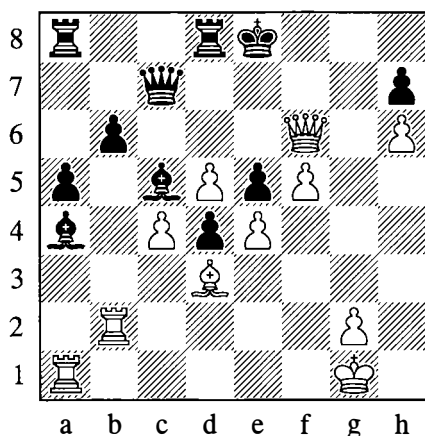
Running short of time, Kasparov ruins his winning position and quickly follows a path downhill.

35.f6 would threaten to push the pawn straight to the end of the board, forcing 35...♗f7 36.♗xe5 ♖e8 37.♗g5 ♗g6. Here Kasparov gives a long complicated win with 38.♗f4, but simpler is probably 38.♗xg6!? hxg6 39.f7 ♖e5, when White brings in the other rook while preventing Black from swinging the rook over to h-file:



40.g4!! ♖g5 41.♞h2 ♙d6 42.h7! ♙xh2† 43.♙xh2
♙g7 44.f8=♞† ♞xf8 45.♞xf8 ♙xh7 46.♙g3
and the white e-pawn rolls up the board.

35...♙e8 36.♞a1

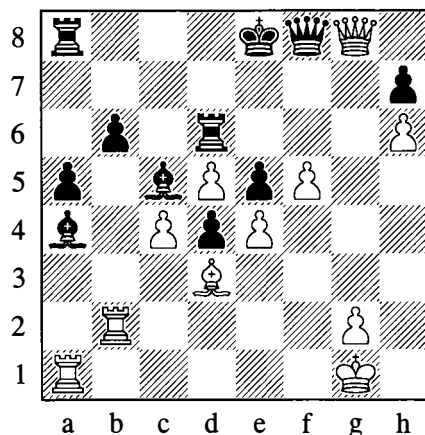


Trapping the bishop, but winning back the piece is not as great as Kasparov might have thought it would be.

36...♞e7!!

Turning the tables entirely. Petrosian made this move within seconds. Kasparov did not feel that he had any chances in the ending, so he tried to muddy the waters.

37.♞e6 ♙d6 38.♞g8† ♞f8



39.♞g3

“After 39.♞xf8† ♙xf8, could Kasparov have drawn? After all, there would be opposite bishops on the board.” The ex-World Champion was asked this question in the press centre after the game was over. “But there were other pieces too,” he replied. “If a draw was there, I don’t think it would have been at all simple. For instance: 40.♞xa4 ♞xh6 41.g3 ♙g7 42.♞h2 ♞xh2 43.♙xh2 ♙f6. Afterwards Black will exchange his h-pawn for the white g-pawn, and his king will reach f4. Defending for White won’t be easy – the black bishop is much stronger than its opposite number, and Black’s passed a- and d-pawns are clearly superior to White’s blocked d- and f-pawns.”

An even stronger move order is 40...♙e7!, where White will not be able to fight for the h-file. After 41.g3 ♞g8 42.♙g2 ♞xh6 White’s prospects are poor.

39...♞xh6 40.♞xa4?

Losing instantly and thus avoiding the ending. Kasparov clearly missed Petrosian’s next move.

40...♞c1† 41.♙f2 ♞xb2† 42.♙f3 ♙f7
0–1

GAME 110

Garry Kasparov – Tigran Petrosian

Tilburg 1981

Notes by Jacob Aagaard

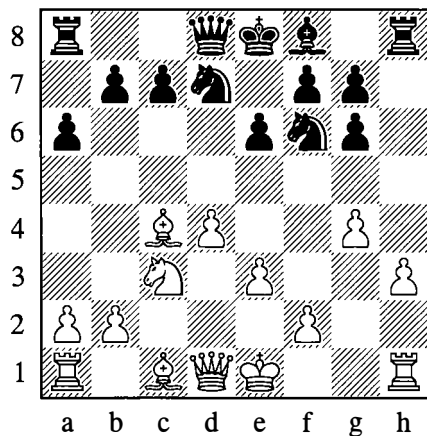
1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♙f3 ♙f6 4.e3 ♙g4!?

An interesting sideline. The standard continuation is 4...e6 5.♙xc4 c5 6.0–0 a6, which Kasparov later employed as his main defence, for example in his match against Vladimir Kramnik.

5.♙xc4 e6 6.h3 ♙h5 7.♘c3 a6 8.g4

A traditional double-edged decision by Kasparov. White wins the two bishops, but also slightly weakens his pawn structure.

8...♙g6 9.♘e5 ♘bd7 10.♘xg6 hxg6



11.♙f1!

Putting the bishop towards the most obvious space. As White cannot do anything with it where it is, it makes a lot of sense.

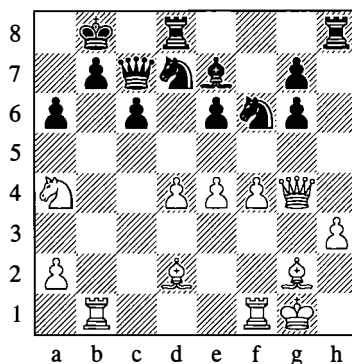
11...c6 12.♙g2 ♖c7 13.0-0 ♙e7 14.f4 ♘b6 15.g5 ♘fd7 16.♙g4 0-0-0 17.♙b1 ♘b8

Both players have achieved what they wanted. Kasparov has an attacking position, the two bishops and a wild game. Petrosian has a solid position that will not be easy to overrun.

18.b4 ♘d5 19.♘a4 f5!

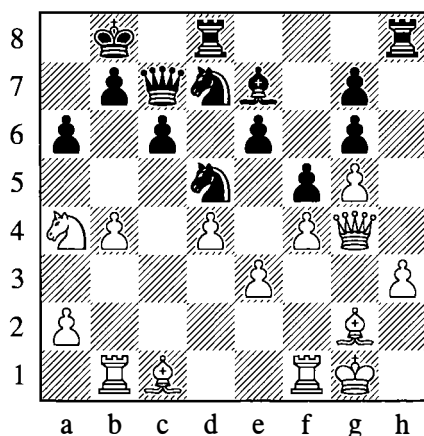
Typical Petrosian. Instead of grabbing a pawn and being pushed backwards, he offers a pawn of his own.

Kasparov was very young and had spent his time on 19...♘xb4?, which is poor because of: 20.♙d2 ♘d5 21.e4 f5 22.gxf6 ♘5xf6



Here the strongest might be 23.♙e2! keeping the pressure. I cannot see why White should be eager to grab back the pawn or hurry to prove compensation; it seems permanent to me.

Kasparov was planning 23.♙xe6 ♘c5 24.♘xc5 ♙xc5 25.dxc5 ♙xd2 26.e5 ♘d5 27.♙xg6 with some advantage during the game, though I doubt it is much after 27...♙d8.



20.♙g3

Kasparov accepts that Black has permanent control of the d5-square.

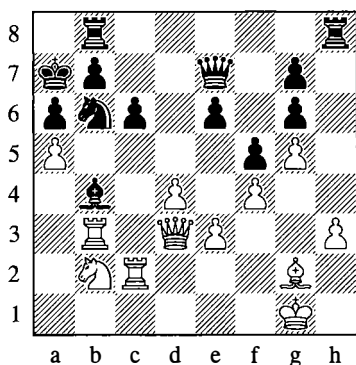
20.gxf6 gxf6 21.♙xe6 ♙de8 would give Black great counterplay.

20...♘xb4

Petrosian was not against free pawns, just bad positions. He thrived in positions where the opponent had to prove his compensation.

21.♔d2 ♘d5 22.♖fc1 ♘a7 23.♜e1 ♔a3
24.♜c2 ♜d6 25.♞b3 ♜e7 26.♜e2 ♞b8
27.♜d3 ♔d6 28.♘b2 ♞hc8

28...♘b6 was also interesting. You could easily imagine Kasparov roaming forward with 29.a4 ♘b4 30.♔xb4 ♔xb4 31.a5!?, where Petrosian would not fall into the trap:



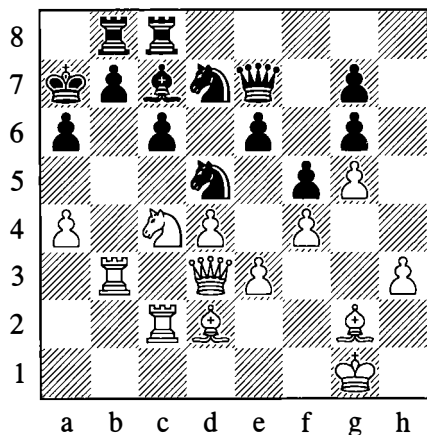
31...♔xa5? 32.♜c5! ♔e1 33.♜xb6 ♘xb6
34.♜b1 White has a winning position, based on the following tactic: 34...♔g3 35.♘c4† ♘a7 36.♜b6† ♘a8 37.♜xc6!

Rather Petrosian would have played 31...♘d5! 32.♘c4 ♔d6 with the idea of ...♘c7-b5.

29.♘c4 ♔c7?!

This is too cautious. Much better was 29...b5!? intending 30.♘a5 c5 with unclear play.

30.a4



30...b5!?

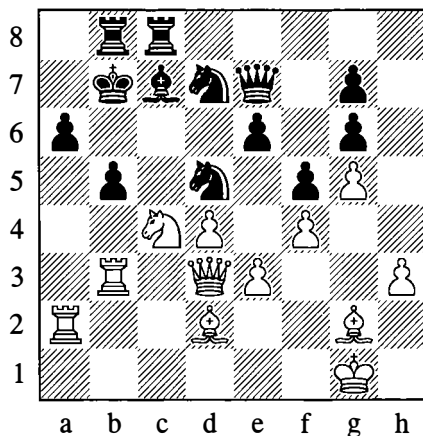
30...♘b6 31.♘a5 ♔d8 32.♔f1 was also dangerous for Black. The position is such that you can analyse it deeply and find defensive resources for Black everywhere, but never equality. The possibility that Black would err under such circumstances is great, although it went differently in the game.

31.♔xb5 ♔xb5 32.♞a2

32.♘a3!? was in principle a better move order, but as the game develops it is not very important.

32...♘b7?!

Petrosian takes all possible risk. His position would be unpleasant after 32...♔d6 33.♜xb5 ♜xb5 34.♘d6 ♜xd6 35.♜xb5 ♜c2 36.♜b1 ♜xa2 37.♜xa2, though objectively sounder.



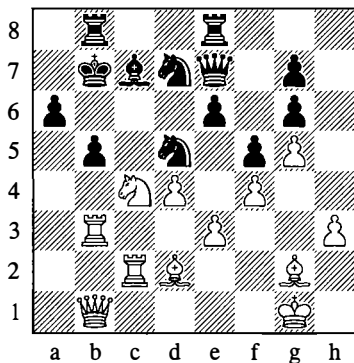
33.♔b4?!

In *My Great Predecessors* Kasparov was unhappy that he did not play 33.♘a3!?, when after 33...♔b6 34.♘c2 ♞a8 35.♘b4 ♜d6 White has a fantastic initiative, as long as he does not fall for 36.e4? ♘c5!! 37.dxc5 ♜xc5† 38.♔h2 ♜g1† 39.♔g3 ♜f2† with perpetual check.

For some reason, however, he rejects 33.♜b1!, which is absolutely decisive. Black does not have an available move and just loses.

33...♖a8 34.♙xd5† exd5 35.♞xb5† axb5
36.♞xb5† ♖b6 37.♜xb6 ♙xb6 38.♞xd5† and
White finishes two pawns up.

33...♞e8 34.♞c2! is really a beautiful point.

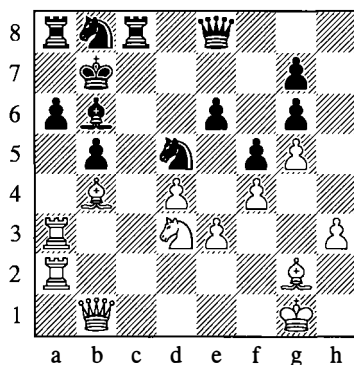


White is threatening ♙b4 as well as
35.♞xb5† axb5 36.♞xb5† ♖c8 37.♞a6† ♞b7
38.♜a5. Black is defenceless. There is nothing
that works. For example, 34...♞d8 fails to
35.♞xb5† ♖a7 36.♞a2 followed by ♙f1 with
a decisive attack.

33...♞e8! 34.♙d6?!

Kasparov is slowly losing his initiative.

34.♜b2! looks right to me. White could
reorganize his troops with: 34...♖a8 35.♞b1
♙b6 36.♞ba3 ♜b8 37.♜d3



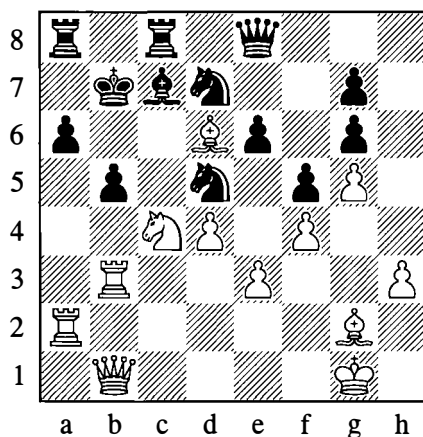
With grand compensation for the pawn,
although Black is able to resist at this point.

34...♖a8

Kasparov must have believed that Black
was in serious trouble here, but once again
Petrosian completely surprised him with his
next move.

35.♞b1

After 35.♙a3!? White would have kept
the pressure. The reorganization with ♞b1
and ♜b2-d3 still makes great sense. After
35...♜b6 36.♜a5† ♖b8 37.♙c5 Black
remains under serious pressure.



35...♜c6!!

This reminds me of Petrosian's 1959 win
against Fischer in Yugoslavia on page 129. One
thing we have learned in the last few decades,
mainly from Botvinnik, is that the king is often
safest right behind the pawns. Again Petrosian
understood this long before others.

Kasparov writes: "This move, which
Petrosian made instantly, threw me into
complete confusion: how is it possible to move
the king forward with a board full of pieces?!
After Steinitz, who had done such a thing?! The
psychological effect of the 30...b5!? thrust and
the king march ...♜a7-b7-c6 was so strong,
that I was unable to gather my thoughts and
I quickly lost."

36.♞ba3?

The only way to continue was 36.♙xc7 bxc4 37.♜b7 ♜xc7 38.♜xa6† ♜xa6 39.♞b5† ♔d6 40.♞xa6† ♔e7 41.♙xd5 ♜xb7 42.♙xb7 ♞b8 and the endgame will end in a draw.

36...bxc4 37.♜xa6† ♜xa6 38.♜xa6† ♙b6

38...♗7b6 was also decisive.

39.♙c5 ♞d8 40.♞a1 ♗xc5 41.dxc5 ♔xc5 42.♜a4

0-1

Kasparov: "Post-mortem analysis revealed how much more profoundly my opponent had assessed the positions in the game than I had."

GAME 111

Jan Timman – Tigran Petrosian

Las Palmas 1982

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.♗c3 c6 5.a4

A variation of the Slav Defence has arisen by transposition.

5...♙g4 6.♗e5 ♙h5 7.f3 ♗fd7

This immediate reaction is essential. After 7...e6 8.g4 ♙g6 9.h4 Black would be in serious difficulties.

8.♗xc4 e5 9.♗xe5!

It isn't clear whether Timman was prepared for this rarely seen variation, but the move he makes here is not recommended by theory. To support that verdict, the *Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings* quotes the following game: 9.♗xe5 ♗xe5 10.dxe5 ♗d7 11.f4 ♙c5 12.g3 ♙g4 13.♙g2 ♞b6 14.♙d2 a5 15.♗e4 f5!, and Black has compensation for the small material deficit. Osnos – Bronstein, USSR 1973.

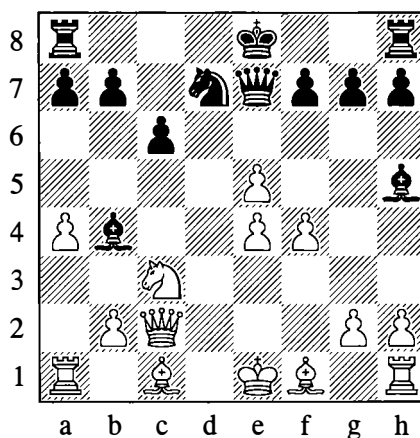
9...♗xe5 10.dxe5 ♗d7!? 11.f4

The game Farago – Kostic, Belgrade 1982, continued 11.♗e4?! ♗xe5 12.♞xd8† ♜xd8 13.♗g3 ♙b4† 14.♔f2 ♙c5†! 15.♙e3 ♙xe3† 16.♔xe3 ♗c4† 17.♔f4 ♙g6, with a clear plus for Black.

11...♙b4 12.♞c2 ♞e7

Black wants to play 13...f6 and then seize control of e3 and e4 after 14.exf6 ♗xf6.

13.e4



13...g5!

The only move.

14.♙e2

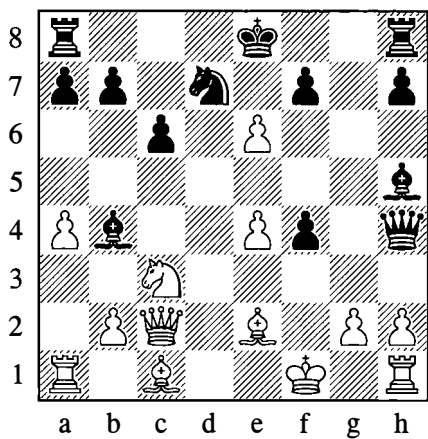
Should White play 14.g4, Black would gain an overwhelming position after 14...♙xg4 15.♜g1 h5 16.h3 ♞c5! 17.♜g3 gxf4.

14...gxf4! 15.e6?

A miscalculation. Instead, 15.♙xh5 ♞h4† 16.♞f2 ♞xh5 17.♙xf4 ♗xe5 18.♞d4 (not 18.0-0?? ♙c5) 18...♙xc3† 19.♞xc3 (or 19.bxc3) would preserve a slight plus for White.

15...♞h4† 16.♔f1

Timman probably hadn't seen that after 16.g3 fxg3 17.exd7† ♔e7 he would be in a bad way.



16...♙xe2† 17.♚xe2 fxe6

The unfortunate position of the white king determines the outcome of the fight.

18.♚f2 ♚e7 19.e5 ♘xe5 20.♙xf4 ♜f8
21.♞d1 ♙c5

White resigned.

0–1

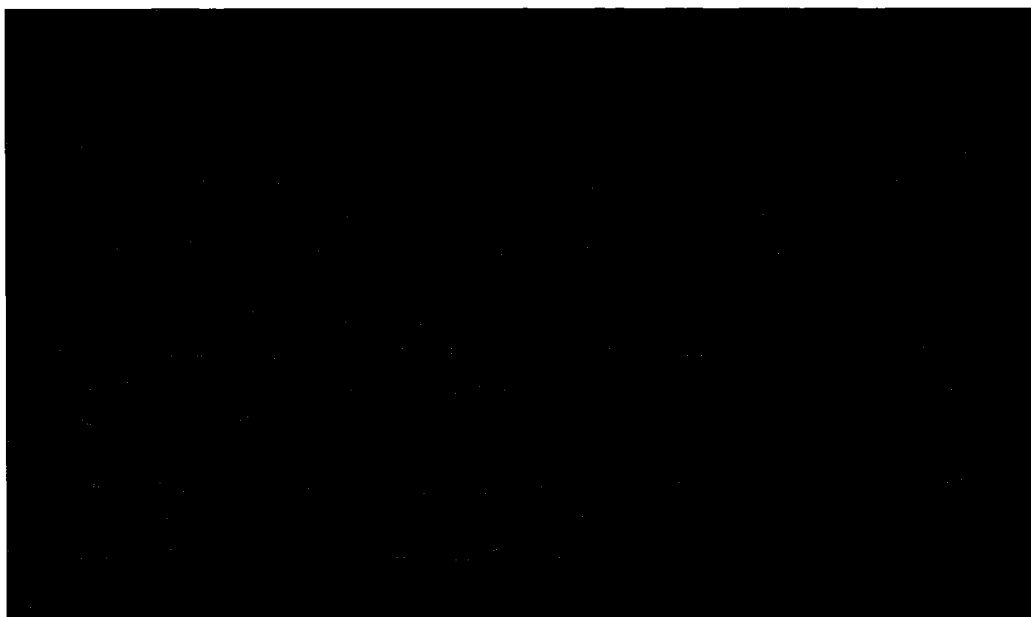
Appendix

Under the Microscope of the Computer

By *Grandmaster Karsten Mueller*

World Champion Tigran V. Petrosian excelled as a defender and as a counter-attacking player. He clearly put a great deal of effort into the analysis of his games, but modern computers nevertheless find a few typical problems which I have listed below:

- 1) Missing tactical options – especially in unbalanced, complicated positions.
- 2) Defence is in general more difficult for humans than attack, and even Petrosian misses a few moments.
- 3) Intermediate Moves.
- 4) Stopping the analysis too early: assuming that matters are clear and decided when the fight is not yet over.



1) Missing tactical options

Unbalanced positions with many tactical possibilities are difficult to analyse. In the following game Petrosian's attack was not easy to play and his plan to use the f-pawn as battering ram was flawed, had Sorokin defended correctly:

Tigran Petrosian – Nikolay Sorokin

Tbilisi 1945

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 c6 3.d4 d5 4.cxd5 cxd5
5.♘f3 ♘c6 6.♙f4 ♙f5 7.e3 ♖b6 8.a3 e6
9.♙d3 ♙xd3 10.♗xd3 ♜c8 11.0-0 ♘a5
12.e4 dxe4

12...♗xb2? is indeed too risky. After Petrosian's 13.♙d2! White is also better, but matters are not so clear, for example:

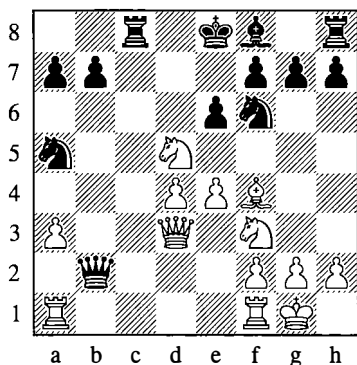
a) 13...♗b3 14.♘e5 dxe4 15.♗e2

b) 13...dxe4 14.♘xe4 ♘xe4 (14...♗b3
15.♘xf6† gxf6 16.♗e4) 15.♗xe4 ♘c4 16.♞ac1
♙e7 17.d5

c) 13...♗b6 14.exd5 ♗a6 15.♗b1

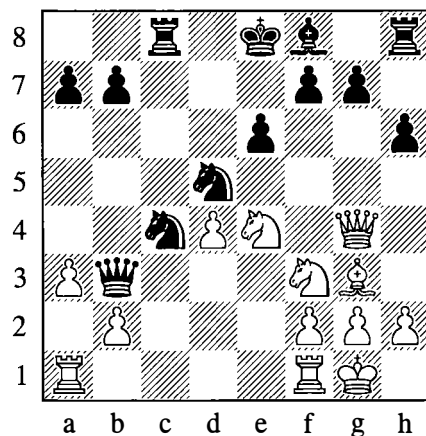
In all cases with an initiative for White.

But White has a stronger move: 13.♘xd5!



13...♘xd5 (13...exd5? 14.exd5 ♙e7 15.♞fb1
♗c2 16.♗b5†+–) 14.exd5 ♗b3 15.♗xb3
♘xb3 16.♞ab1 ♘a5 17.dxe6 ♙xa3 18.♞a1
♘c4 19.exf7† ♘xf7 20.♞fb1 b6 21.♘d2 ♘xd2
22.♙xd2 ♙e7 23.♞xa7 with a clear advantage.

13.♘xe4 ♘d5 14.♙g3 ♗b3 15.♗d2 ♘c4
16.♗g5 h6 17.♗g4

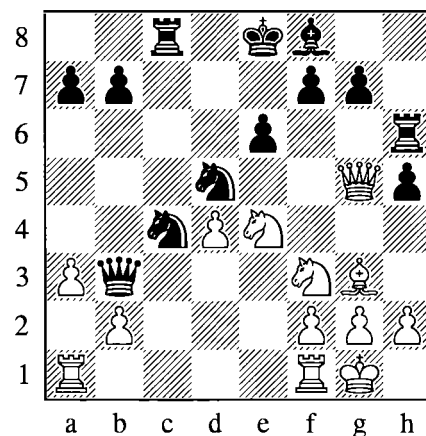


17...h5?

Petrosian does not comment, but this advance is too committal.

17...g6 is more solid: 18.♘e5 (18.♙e5 ♘xe5
19.♘xe5 ♙e7 20.♞ac1 ♞d8) 18...♘xe5
19.♙xe5 ♞g8 20.♘c3 ♘xc3 21.bxc3 ♞xc3
22.♞ab1 ♗d5 White is still better, but the
damage has been limited.

18.♗g5 ♞h6

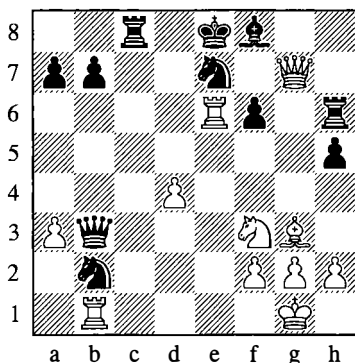


19.♞ac1?

Petrosian chooses the wrong rook:

19.♞fe1! ♜cb6

19...♜xb2 20.♞ab1 f6 21.♜d6† ♜xd6
22.♞xg7 ♜f8 23.♞xe6† ♜e7



24.♞xe7† ♜xe7 25.♞xh6+–

19...♞d8 20.♜c5 ♜xc5 21.dxc5 ♞g6
22.♞xh5+–

20.♞ac1 ♞xc1 21.♞xc1

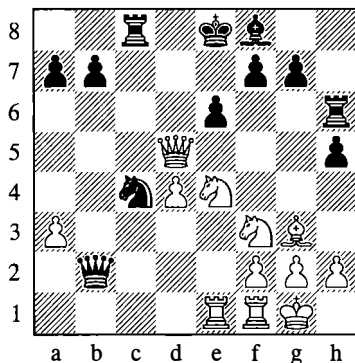
Maybe Petrosian had missed this backward queen move. This type of move is often overlooked by humans.

21...♞c4 22.♞g5 ♞c2 23.♜d6

White is winning.

19...♜xb2?

19...♞xb2! was called for. Now after 20.♞xd5 Black has a surprising equalizer:



20...♜e7!! It is always difficult for a human analyst to find such intermediate moves – it is so natural to simply recapture.

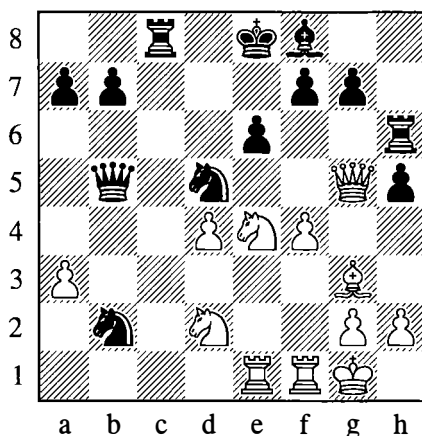
20.♜fd2?

20.♞c1! ♞d8 21.♜c5 ♜xc5 22.dxc5 ♞g6
23.♞xh5 ♞h6 24.♞g4 ♞g6 25.♞e4 ♜d3
26.♜d4 ♜f6 27.♞xg6 ♞xd4 28.♞xg7±

20...♞b5 21.f4?

This plan is rather slow, as Black can stop f4-f5 in many lines.

The engines prefer 21.♞c1 but now White is not better after 21...♞d8.



21...♞g6?

The active defence 21...♜d3! refutes White's approach, for instance: 22.f5 (22.♞b1 ♞a6 23.f5 f6 24.♞h4 ♜e3+–) 22...♜xe1 23.fxe6 ♜f3† 24.♜xf3 ♞xe6 25.♜e5 ♜f6 26.♞f5 ♞d5 and Black wins.

22.♞xh5?

Taking material is always tempting for humans.

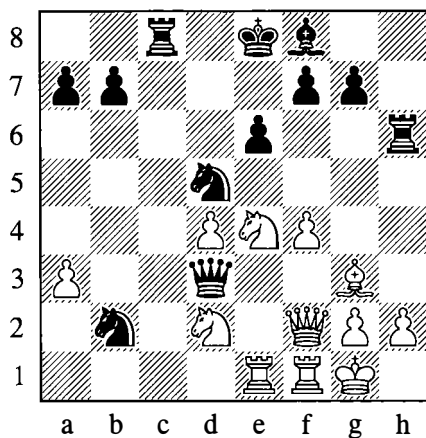
The engines prefer 22.♞h4 when Black will struggle to stop White blowing the position open, for example: 22...♜d3 23.f5 ♞xg3 24.hxg3 ♜xe1 25.♞xe1 With a dangerous attack.

22...♞h6 23.♞f3 ♞d3?!

The direct 23...f5! is even better.

24. ♖f2?!

24.f5 ♖xf3 25.♞xf3 ♞c2 26.♙d6 limits the damage.

**24...g6?**

This does not stop the advance, but gives it even more power.

Petrosian's 24...f5! is not only more tenacious, but gives Black the advantage after 25.♙g5 ♞c6 26.♞e5 ♙e7 27.♞fe1 ♖a6.

25.f5!!

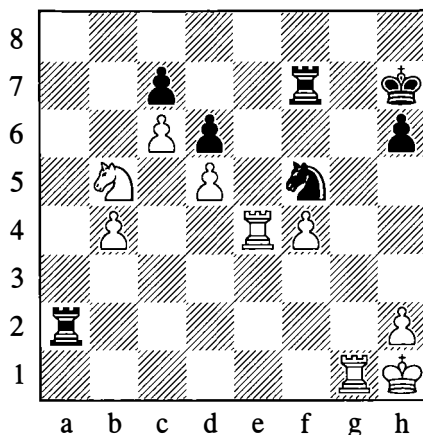
Now White's attack crashes through.

25...gxf5 26.♖xf5 ♖xd4† 27.♙h1 ♙e7 28.♖xf7† ♙d7 29.♙f3 ♖h8 30.♙e5 ♖h7 31.♖xh7 ♞xh7 32.♙xb2 ♞c2 33.♙d4 ♙xa3 34.♙e5† ♙d8 35.♙g5 ♞h5 36.♙xe6† ♙e7 37.♙g6† ♙d6 38.♙gf4 ♙xf4 39.♙xf4 1-0

Tigran Petrosian – Svetozar Gligoric

Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade 1959

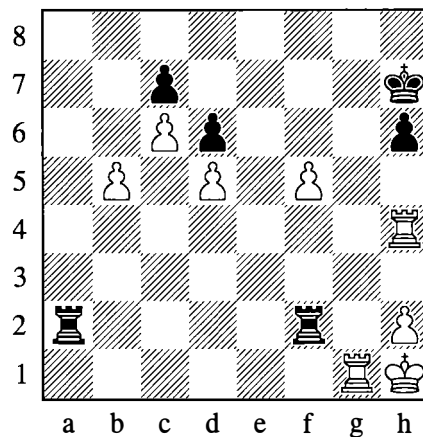
Usually the attacker does not want to exchange pieces with attacking potential:

**37.♙d4?**

"After this, Black's other rook too penetrates to the second rank. But White had nothing else." (Petrosian)

He misses the direct 37.♞e8!, which wins. For example: 37...♞d2 (37...♙h4 38.♙d4 ♞d2 39.♞e4+-) 38.♙c3 ♞b2 39.♞d8 ♞xb4 40.♞d7 ♞e7 41.♞e1 ♞g7 42.♙e4 ♞b8 43.♞g1 ♞e7 44.♙f6† ♙h8 45.♞xe7 ♙xe7 46.♞e1 ♙g6 47.♞e8† ♞xe8 48.♙xe8 ♙xf4 49.♙xc7+-

37...♙xd4 38.♞xd4 ♞e7 39.f5 ♞ee2 40.♞h4 ♞f2 41.b5



41...♖ab2?

41...♖ac2 indeed draws, as given by Petrosian.

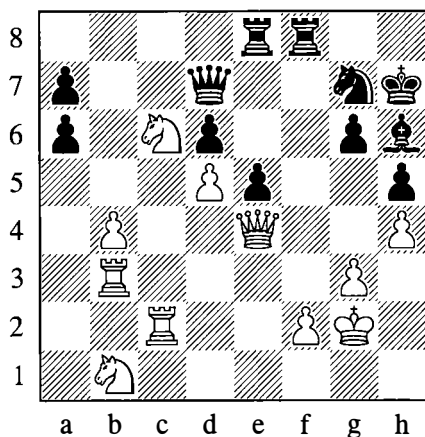
42.b6! ♜xb6 43.♜hg4 ♜b8 44.♜g7† ♔h8
45.♜7g6

1–0

Tigran Petrosian – Eduard Gufeld

Leningrad 1960

The analysis of the next game was by Gufeld. On Black's 35th move he missed a strong defensive idea:



35...♜f5?

Black's knight is too poorly placed now. It had to be activated with 35...♖f5! 36.♜a3 ♖d4 37.♜ca2 ♜c8 38.♖xa7 (38.♖c3 can be met by 38...♜f4) 38...♜c4 39.♖c6 ♜a8 when Black can harbour hopes to defend.

36.♜a3 ♜b7 37.♖c3 ♜ef8 38.♜c4 ♜f3
39.♜xa6 ♜e3 40.♖e4

Petrosian simply ignores the intruding bishop.

40.fxe3 wins as well.

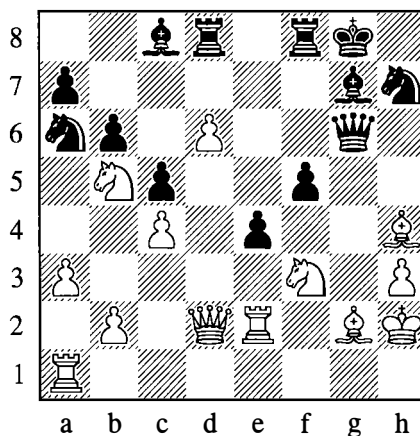
40...♜h6 41.♜xa7

1–0

Drazen Marovic – Tigran Petrosian

Amsterdam 1973

In the following case Petrosian runs into a strong attack and gives up hope too early:



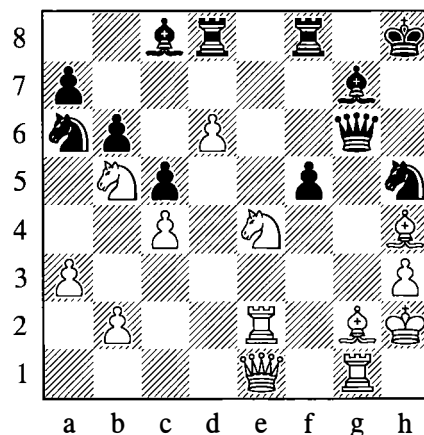
30.♖g5?

The direct 30.♜g1! wins, for instance: 30...♜d7 (30...exf3 31.♜xf3+–) 31.♜f1 ♜e6 32.♜e7 ♜f7 33.♜f4+–

30...♖f6 31.♜g1 ♔h8 32.♜e1 ♖h5?

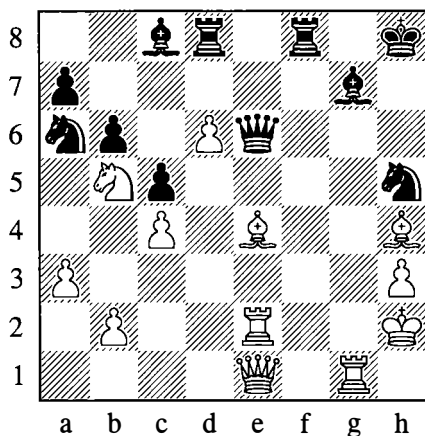
After 32...♜de8 the position is dynamically balanced.

33.♖xe4!



"An excellent stroke. My forces are badly placed, and White sacrifices a piece to expose the tactical weaknesses of the black formation. I recall that at that moment I put the knight sacrifice down to time-trouble desperation, but after the following sequence I was amazed by how badly things stood for me." (Petrosian). He seems to have given up hope.

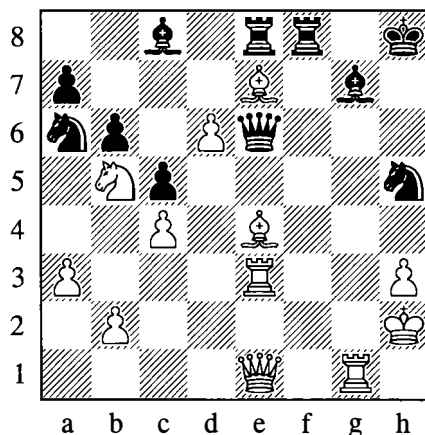
33...fxe4 34.♙xe4 ♖e6



35.♞e3?

Marovic misses the strike: 35.♞xg7!! ♜xg7 (35...♜xg7 36.♙xd8 ♖e5† 37.♜g1 ♜h5 38.♙g2 ♖g3 39.♙e7+-) 36.♖c3† ♞f6 37.♞g2† ♜h8 38.♙xf6† ♖xf6 39.♞g5 ♖xc3 40.♞xh5† ♜g7 41.bxc3+-

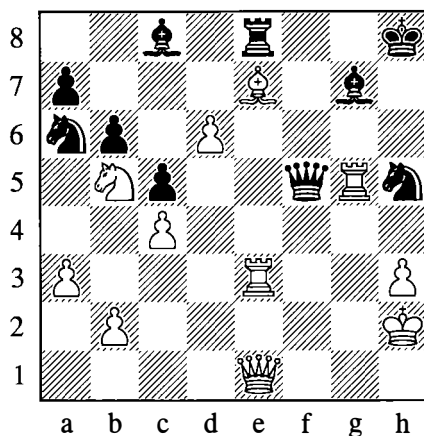
35...♞de8 36.♙e7



36...♞f5?

36...♞e5† was the last chance to fight, when a computer line runs 37.♜h1 ♙h6 38.♖c3 ♖xc3 39.♞xc3 ♞f4 40.♙c6 ♜b8 41.♞g6 ♜xc6 42.♞xh6† ♜g7 43.♞xh5 ♜xe7 44.dxe7 ♙b7† 45.♜g1 ♞xe7 46.♞g3† ♜f6 with chances to hold.

37.♙xf5 ♖xf5 38.♞g5



38...♞f7?!

38...♞f4† was more tenacious, but ultimately White should win as well, for example: 39.♜g2 ♞g8 40.♞xh5† ♙h6† 41.♞g3 ♞xg3† 42.♖xg3 ♙b7† 43.♞d5 ♖xc4 44.♖c3† ♖xc3 45.♜xc3 ♜b8 46.♜g3+-

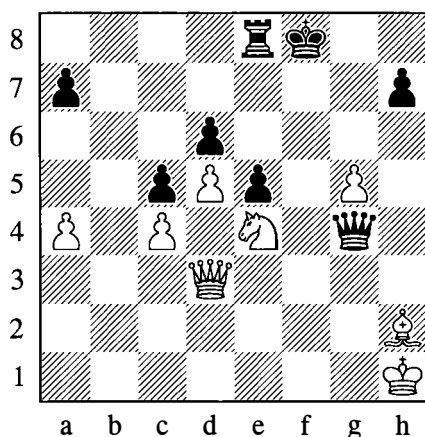
39.♖h4 ♜g8 40.♞xh5 ♙xh3 41.♜xh3
1-0

2) Defence is more difficult than attack

Most humans find it easier to attack and even Petrosian, who was a very tenacious defender, misses defensive resources in his annotations:

Tigran Petrosian – Vladimir Simagin

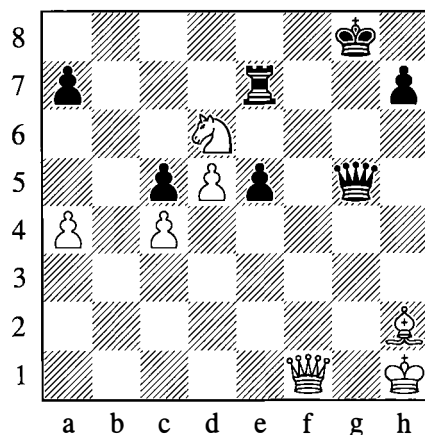
Moscow (5) 1956



33...♞e7?

Petrosian does not comment on this, but 33...♞f5! was the only chance to offer real resistance. For example: 34.♟xc5 (34.♟g2 ♞b8) 34...♞xd3 35.♟xd3 ♞b8 36.♟g2 (36.c5 ♞b3) 36...♞b3 37.♟f2 ♞c3 38.♟e4 ♞xc4 39.♟xd6 ♞xa4 40.♟f3 ♞d4 and Black should be able to hold.

34.♟xd6 ♞xg5 35.♞f1† ♟g8

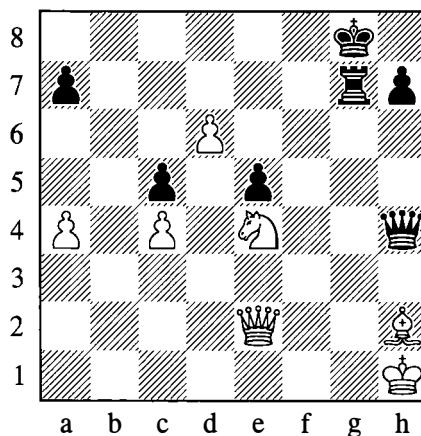


36.♟e4?!

Petrosian's original plan of 36.♞g1! would have been a quicker win.

36...♞h4 37.♞e2 ♞g7 38.d6?!

38.♟xc5 is a more precise route to a clear advantage.



38...♞h6?

Petrosian does not comment here, but it brings White back on track. Now time trouble dictates the play.

38...a5! 39.♞e3 ♟h8 is more tenacious, but White should win in the long run anyway.

39.♞d1?

39.♞f1 wins.

39...♞h4?

The active 39...♞h3 gives Black excellent drawing chances, as given by Petrosian.

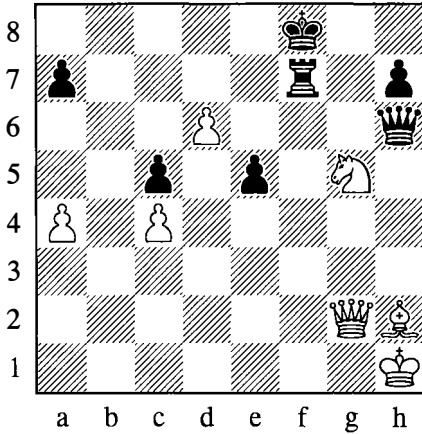
40.♞e2?

40.♟g3! ♞h3 41.♞h5 wins directly.

40...♞h6? 41.♞f1!

Now the time control has been reached, and Petrosian seals the right move. The adjournment presents no problems:

41...♞f7 42.♞g2† ♟f8 43.♟g5



43...♞xd6?!

Simagin allows a beautiful combination, but Black is lost in any case.

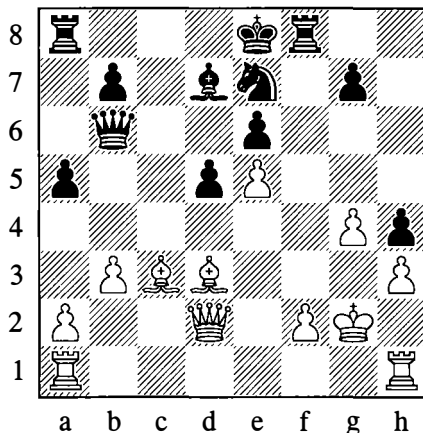
After Petrosian's 43...♞d7!? one way to win is: 44.♞f3† ♔g7 45.♞e4 ♞xd6 46.♞xd6 ♞c1† 47.♞g1 ♞h6† 48.♞g2 ♞xd6 49.♞g3† ♔f7 50.♞f2† ♔e6 51.♞xc5 ♞d2† 52.♞f2 ♞g5† 53.♞f3 ♞f4† 54.♞e2 ♞e4† 55.♞d2 ♞f4† 56.♞e3 ♞h2† 57.♞c3

44.♞a8† ♔g7 45.♞xe5† ♞xe5 46.♞h8† ♔xh8 47.♞xf7†
1-0

Ratmir Kholmov – Tigran Petrosian

Moscow 1949

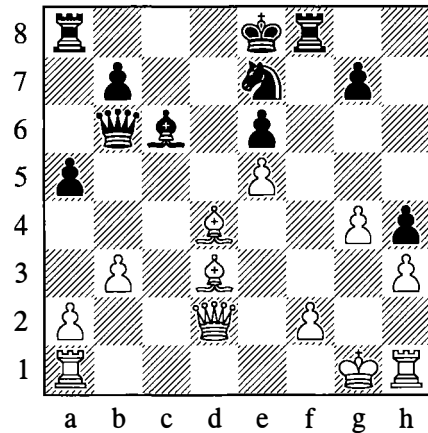
Evaluating an unbalanced position is not easy:



20...d4!

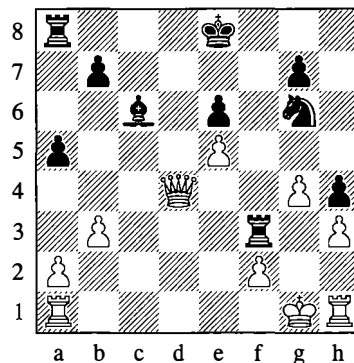
Petrosian feels that he should seize the moment.

21.♞xd4 ♞c6† 22.♞g1



22...♞c7?!

A little bit passive. Petrosian favours: 22...♞xd4?! 23.♞g6† ♞xg6 24.♞xd4 ♞f3 (24...♞d8 also gives Black enough play, but no more)



Black indeed has compensation for the sacrificed queen, but not more, for example: 25.♞d1 ♞f4 26.♞c4 g5 27.♞d6 ♞d8 28.♞xe6† ♞xe6 29.♞xe6† ♔f8 30.♞h6 White remains on top.

The engine move 22...♞b4!! is best as Black has good winning chances now: 23.♞d1 (23.♞xb4

axb4 24.♙c5 b6 25.♙e3 ♙xh1 26.♗xh1 ♖d5) 23...♞xd2 24.♞xd2 ♙xh1 25.♗xh1 ♜f7 Such a move is easy to miss as it is not as forcing as the alternatives.

23.♞h2 0–0–0 24.♙c4?!

24.♙e2 is more circumspect.

24...♖g6?!

24...♞d7! would have created more pressure: 25.♞d1 ♙f3 26.♞c3 ♖c6 27.♞d2 ♞c7 28.♙xe6† ♜b8 Black has more than enough compensation for the two pawns.

25.♞e3

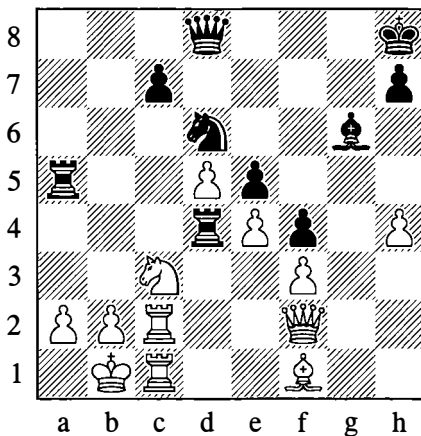
½–½

3) Intermediate Moves

In the following famous position both players missed an important point over the board, while Petrosian missed an intermediate move in his analysis:

Tigran Petrosian – Svetozar Gligoric

Zurich 1953

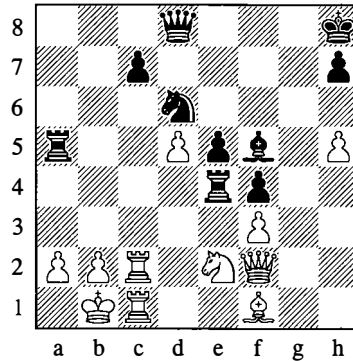


37.♖e2?

This retreat gives Black a chance to get back into the game.

37...♞da4?

37...♞xe4!! 38.h5! (After 38.fxe4? ♖xe4 39.♞e1 ♞xd5 Black has a strong attack. At the board both players overlooked 39...♞xd5.) 38...♙f5



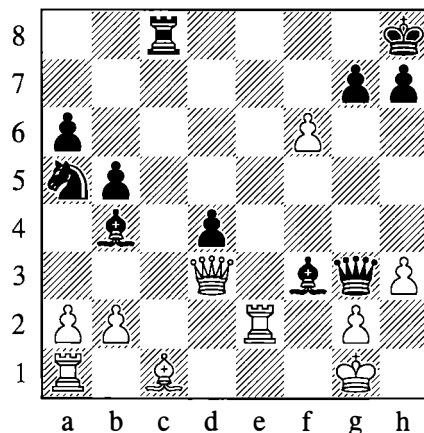
39.♙h3!! This intermediate move escaped the attention of the annotator. 39...♞ea4 40.♖c3 ♙xh3 (40...♙xc2† 41.♞xc2 ♞b4 42.b3) 41.♖xa4 ♞xa4 42.♞xc7 ♙f5† 43.♗a1 White is only slightly worse.

38.♖c3 ♞d4 39.b3 ♞b8 40.h5 ♙xh5 41.♞h4 1–0

Tigran Petrosian – Petar Trifunovic

Leningrad 1957

In the next case the intermediate move is much stronger than the game continuation, although that should also win in the long run:

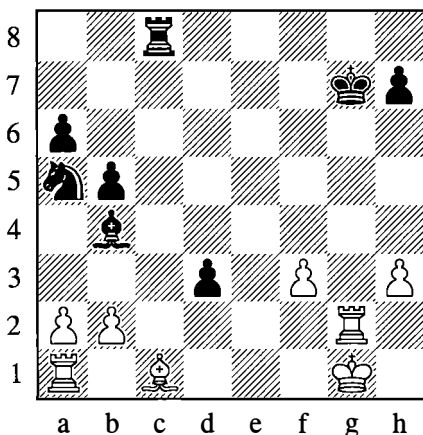


25. ♖xf3?!

After the engine blow 25.f7!! Black can resign on the spot: 25...♞f8 26.♖xf3 ♖xf3 27.gxf3 ♞xf7 28.♙d2+–

25...♖xf3 26.fxg7† ♙xg7

26...♙g8 does not help, due to 27.gxf3 d3 28.♞g2 ♖c4 29.♙g5 as given by Petrosian. The further line 29...d2 30.♙f1 is also given by the editors.

27.gxf3 d3 28.♞g2†**28...♙f6?**

This allows the activation of White's forces with a gain of time. 28...♙f7 puts up more resistance, but White should win in the long run after 29.♙f4 ♞d8 30.♞d1 ♙c5† 31.♙f1 ♖c4 32.b3 ♖e3† 33.♙xe3 ♙xe3 34.♞g4.

29.♙g5† ♙f5 30.♞d1

"The queenside has awoken from its slumbers. The rest is a matter of uncomplicated technique." (Petrosian)

30...♞c2 31.h4 d2 32.♙xd2 ♞xb2 33.♞g5† ♙e6 34.♞e1† ♙f6 35.♙xb4 ♞xb4 36.♞e4 ♞b2 37.♞f4† ♙e6 38.♞e4† ♙f6 39.♞g2 ♞b1† 40.♙h2 ♖c4 41.♞ge2 a5?! 42.♞f4† ♙g6 43.♞g2† ♙h5 44.♞f5†

44.♞g5† ♙h6 45.♞f6# mates directly.

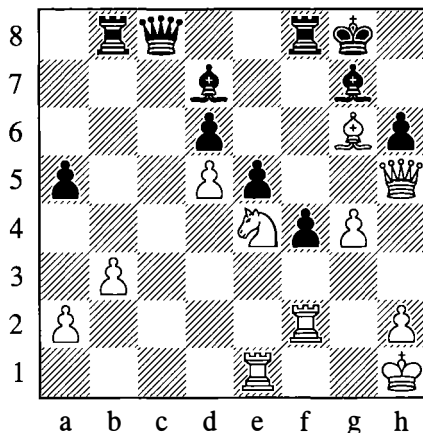
44...♙h6 45.f4 ♖e3 46.♞f6† ♙h5 47.♞g5† ♙xh4 48.♞h6#
1–0

4) Stopping the analysis too early

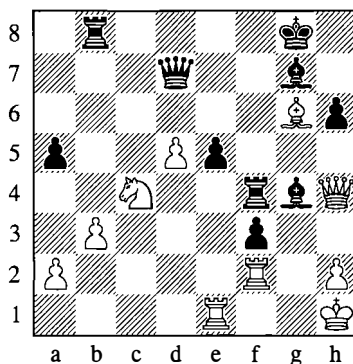
Petrosian does not comment on the final segment of the following game. Many points remain hidden, as Black is by no means lost:

Tigran Petrosian – Alexey Suetin

Riga 1954

**36...♙f3?**

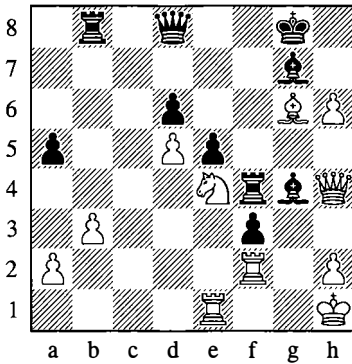
After 36...♙xg4! 37.♞h4 f3 38.♖xd6 ♞d7 39.♖c4 ♞f4 Black is not worse, and may even be better due to his bishops.



One tactical point is that 40.♖xe5? runs into 40...♙xe5 41.♞xe5 ♞g7 and Black is winning.

37.g5 ♖f4?

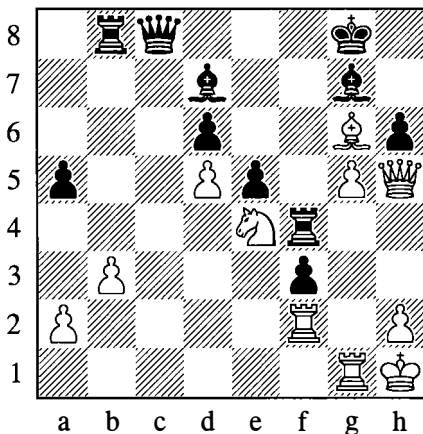
37...♙g4! is forced. 38.♖h4 ♖f4 39.gxh6 ♖d8



White now has a difficult choice: 40.♖g3 (40.h7+ ♖h8 41.♙g5 ♖e7 42.♙f7+ ♖xf7 43.♖xg4 ♖b4 44.♖g3 ♖ff4 45.♖xf3; 40.♙g5 ♙f6 41.h7+ ♖g7 42.♖g1 ♙xg5 43.h8=♖+ ♖xh8 44.♖xg5 ♖d8 45.♖xg4 ♖xg4 46.♖xg4) 40...♙f6 41.♙h5 ♙h4 42.♖g1 ♙xf2 43.♙xf2 ♖h8 44.♙xg4 In all the above cases White is better, but the game is not over yet.

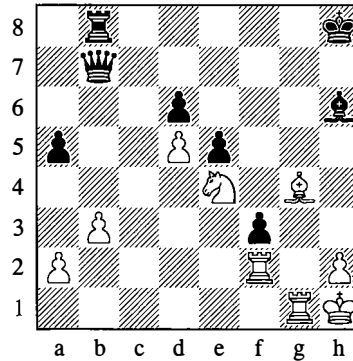
38.♖g1?

Unnecessary preparation. The direct 38.gxh6 ♙g4 39.♖g5 wins.

**38...♙f5?**

Now White's attack does crash through.

38...♙g4! still defends thanks to: 39.♖h4 (39.♙f7+! ♖h8 40.gxh6 ♙xh5 41.hxg7+ ♖h7 42.g8=♖+ ♖xg8 43.♙xg8+ ♖xg8 44.♖xg8 ♖xg8 45.♙xd6 ♖d4 cannot be better for White.) 39...♙h3 40.♖g3 ♖g4 41.♖xg4 ♙xg4 42.gxh6 ♙xh6 43.♙h5 ♖h8 44.♙xg4 ♖b7



White's attack is not over, but the engines claim that Black can hold.

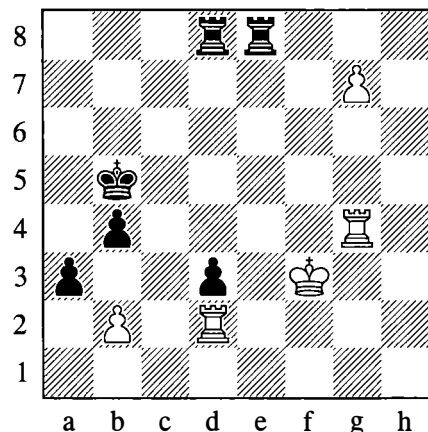
39.gxh6 ♙xe4 40.♙xe4

Black resigned due to 40...♖xe4 41.hxg7. 1-0

Miguel Najdorf – Tigran Petrosian

Santa Monica 1966

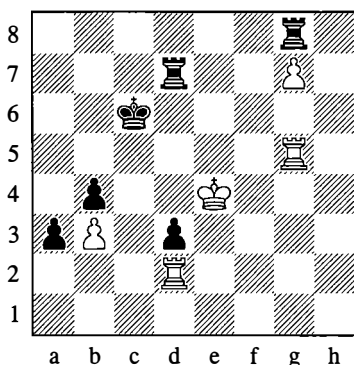
In the following double rook ending matters are much more complicated than expected:



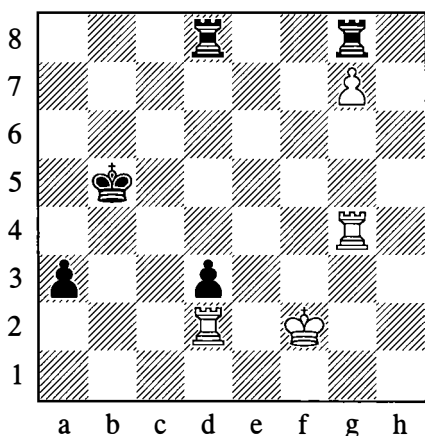
64.bxa3!

Najdorf comments: "A mistake due to fatigue. The right move was 64.b3!, after which no direct win is to be seen."

But closer inspection shows that Black can break that set-up, while the move Najdorf played in the game draws: 64.b3? ♖g8 65.♖g5† ♕c6 66.♕e4 ♖d7



White cannot keep his g-pawn, and will be lost after: 67.♖g6† ♕c7 68.♖g1 (68.♖xd3 ♖e8†+–) 68...♖xg7 69.♖xg7 ♖xg7 70.♖xd3 ♖e7† 71.♕f3 ♖d7 72.♖e3 a2 73.♖e1 ♖d3†

64...bxa3 65.♕f2 ♖g8**66.♕e3?**

The king is too open now.

The alternative 66.♕e1 draws: 66...♖a8

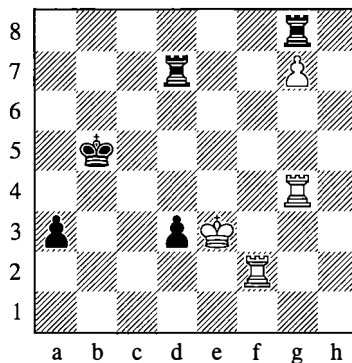
67.♖a2 ♖a4 68.♖g6 ♕b4 69.♖b6† ♕c3 70.♖b7 ♖ga8 71.♖f7 ♖e4† 72.♕f2 ♖ee8 73.♖d7 ♕b3 74.♖d2 a2 75.♖7xd3† Black's king cannot escape, due to: 75...♕c4 76.♖d4† ♕c5 77.♖d5† ♕c6 78.♖d6† ♕c7 79.♖d7† ♕c8 80.♖d8† ♕c7 81.♖xe8 ♖xe8 (81...a1=♖? 82.g8=♖+–) 82.♖xa2 ♖g8=

66...♖d7?

66...♖d6 wins, as now 67.♖f2 (67.♖g1 ♖d7 68.♖a1 ♕b4 69.♖b1† ♕a4 70.♖f2 ♖xg7 71.♖f4† ♕a5 72.♖f5† ♕a6 73.♖f6† ♕a7 74.♖f5 ♖ge7† 75.♕d2 ♖e2† 76.♕d1 ♖b2 is also winning for Black) can be met by: 67...d2 68.♖f5† ♕c6 69.♖c4† ♕d7 70.♖f7† ♕e6+–

67.♖xd3?

Najdorf and Petrosian miss the activation with 67.♖f2!!



Black cannot win, a sample line being: 67...d2 (67...♖e8† 68.♕d2 a2 69.♖f5† ♕c6 70.♖a5=) 68.♖f5† ♕a6 69.♖a4† ♕b6 70.♖b4† ♕c6 71.♖c4† ♕d6 72.♖d4† ♕e7 73.♖xd7† ♕xd7 74.♕xd2 ♖xg7 75.♖a5=

67...♖xd3† 68.♕xd3 a2 69.♖g1 ♖xg7 70.♖a1!?

70.♖xg7 a1=♖ 71.♖g5† is more tenacious, but the queen wins against the rook of course.

70...♖g2 71.♕c3 ♕a4 72.♖h1 ♕a3 73.♖f1 ♖g8 74.♖h1 ♖c8†

0–1

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Petrosian's Tournament and Match Results

Year	Event	+	–	=	Place
1945	All-Union Junior Tournament, Leningrad	8	1	6	1-3
1945	Georgian Championship, Tbilisi	10	2	3	1
1946	Georgian Championship, Tbilisi	10	4	5	5
1946	Armenian Championship, Yerevan	8	–	2	1
1946	All-Union Junior Tournament, Leningrad	13	–	2	1
1946	Match v. G. Kasparian, Yerevan	5	3	6	
1947	Armenian Championship, Yerevan	7	1	3	2-4
1947	All-Union Candidate Masters Tournament, Tbilisi	8	–	7	1
1947	16th USSR Championship Semi-Final, Moscow	6	4	5	5
1948	Armenian Championship, Yerevan	12	–	1	1-2
1948	Trans-Caucasian Republics Tournament, Tbilisi	6	–	6	2
1949	Armenian Championship, Yerevan	12	2	1	2
1949	17th USSR Championship Semi-Final, Tbilisi	7	1	8	2
1949	17th USSR Championship, Moscow	4	8	7	16
1949	Uzbekistan 25th Anniversary Tournament, Tashkent	11	1	3	1-2
1950	Moscow Championship	4	1	10	3
1950	18th USSR Championship Semi-Final, Gorky	8	3	4	2-3
1950	18th USSR Championship, Moscow	5	6	6	12-13
1951	Strongest Players of Lithuania Tournament, Vilnius	8	3	3	2-4
1951	Match v. M. Mukhitdinov, Tashkent	7	–	7	
1951	19th USSR Championship Semi-Final, Sverdlovsk	9	1	9	1
1951	USSR Team Championship, Tbilisi (board 3)	2	2	1	
1951	Moscow Championship	7	–	5	1
1951	Tournament with Masters' Participation, Tbilisi	7	3	5	2-3
1951	19th USSR Championship, Moscow	8	2	7	2-3
1952	International Tournament, Budapest	6	4	7	7-8
1952	Interzonal Tournament, Stockholm	7	–	13	2-3
1953	International Tournament, Bucharest	7	–	12	2
1953	Candidates Tournament, Neuhausen-Zurich	6	4	18	5
1953	USSR–Austria Match, Vienna	2	–	–	
1954	21st USSR Championship, Kiev	6	–	13	4-5
1954	USSR–Argentina Match, Buenos Aires	1	–	3	
1954	USSR–Uruguay Match, Montevideo	2	–	–	
1954	USSR–France Match, Paris	2	–	–	
1954	USSR–USA Match, New York	2	–	2	
1954	USSR–England Match, London	2	–	–	

Year	Event	+	–	=	Place
1954	USSR–Sweden Match, Stockholm	1	–	1	
1954	USSR Team Championship, Riga (board 1)	5	1	4	1
1954	International Tournament, Belgrade	7	3	9	4-5
1955	22nd USSR Championship, Moscow	4	–	15	3-6
1955	USSR–Hungary Match-Tournament, Budapest	4	–	3	
1955	USSR–USA Match, Moscow	4	–	–	
1955	Interzonal Tournament, Gothenburg	5	–	15	4
1956	Candidates Tournament, Amsterdam	3	2	13	3-7
1956	USSR–Yugoslavia Match, Belgrade	1	1	6	
1956	Moscow Championship	6	1	8	1-2
1956	Moscow Championship Play-off v. Simagin	3	1	1	
1956	24th USSR Championship Semi-Final, Tbilisi	8	–	9	1
1957	24th USSR Championship, Moscow	7	4	10	7-8
1957	USSR–Yugoslavia Match, Leningrad	3	1	4	
1957	European Team Championship, Vienna (board 6)	3	–	2	1
1957	25th USSR Championship Semi-Final, Kiev	7	1	11	
1958	25th USSR Championship, Riga	5	–	12	2
1958	USSR Team Championship, Vilnius (board 2)	4	1	2	
1958	Interzonal Tournament, Portoroz	6	1	13	3-4
1958	13th Olympiad, Munich, (2nd reserve)	8	–	5	1
1959	26th USSR Championship, Tbilisi	8	–	11	1
1959	Moscow–Leningrad Match	1	1	–	
1959	Moscow–Belorussia Match	–	–	2	
1959	USSR–Yugoslavia Match, Kiev (board 2)	2	–	2	
1959	2nd USSR Nations Spartakiad, Moscow (board 3)	3	–	4	1
1959	Candidates Tournament, Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade	7	4	17	3
1960	International Tournament, Beverwijk	4	–	5	1-2
1960	27th USSR Championship, Leningrad	10	2	7	2-3
1960	USSR–Tunisia Match, Tunis	2	–	–	
1960	USSR–Italy Match, Tunis	1	–	–	
1960	USSR – West Germany Match, Hamburg	6	–	1	
1960	International Tournament, Copenhagen	10	–	3	1
1960	USSR Team Championship, Moscow (board 2)	4	1	–	2-4
1960	14th Olympiad, Leipzig (2nd reserve)	11	–	2	1
1960	Moscow–Leningrad Match	1	–	1	
1961	28th USSR Championship, Moscow	9	1	9	1
1961	Moscow Team Championship	2	–	2	
1961	USSR–Yugoslavia Match, Belgrade	3	–	2	

Year	Event	+	–	=	Place
1961	International Tournament, Zurich	7	1	3	2
1961	European Team Championship, Oberhausen (board 4)	4	–	4	
1961	International Tournament, Bled	8	2	9	3-5
1961	USSR Team Championship, Moscow (board 1)	1	3	1	6
1962	Interzonal Tournament, Stockholm	8	–	14	2-3
1962	Candidates Tournament, Curacao	8	–	19	1
1962	USSR–Netherlands Match, The Hague (board 1)	1	–	1	
1962	15th Olympiad, Varna (board 2)	8	–	4	1
1963	World Championship Match v. Botvinnik, Moscow	5	2	15	
1963	International Tournament, Los Angeles	4	1	9	1-2
1963	3rd USSR Nations Spartakiad, Moscow (board 1)	4	2	3	
1964	International Tournament, Buenos Aires	8	–	9	1-2
1964	USSR Team Championship, Moscow (board 1)	2	1	3	3-4
1964	16th Olympiad, Tel-Aviv (board 1)	6	–	7	2
1964	Soviet Trade Unions Championship, Moscow	7	1	7	1
1965	International Tournament, Zagreb	7	1	11	3
1965	European Team Championship, Hamburg (board 1)	2	–	8	
1965	International Tournament, Yerevan	4	–	9	2-3
1965	Moscow–Leningrad Match	–	2	–	
1966	Grandmaster Training Tournament, Moscow	7	1	2	1
1966	Moscow Team Championship	1	–	2	
1966	World Championship Match v. Spassky, Moscow	4	3	17	
1966	International Tournament, Santa Monica	3	3	12	6-7
1966	USSR Team Championship, Moscow (board 1)	2	–	8	3-4
1966	17th Olympiad, Havana (board 1)	10	–	3	1
1967	Moscow Spartakiad	3	1	3	
1967	International Tournament, Moscow	3	3	11	9-12
1967	4th USSR Nations Spartakiad, Moscow (board 1)	3	2	3	4-5
1967	International Tournament, Venice	7	–	6	2-3
1968	International Tournament, Bamberg	5	–	10	2-3
1968	Moscow Championship	6	–	9	1-2
1968	18th Olympiad, Lugano (board 1)	9	–	3	1
1968	International Tournament, Palma de Mallorca	7	1	9	4
1969	World Championship Match v. Spassky, Moscow	4	6	13	
1969	USSR–Yugoslavia Match, Skopje (board 2)	1	1	1	
1969	37th USSR Championship, Moscow	6	–	16	1-2
1969	International Tournament, Palma de Mallorca	6	–	11	2
1970	USSR Championship Play-off v. Polugaevsky, Moscow	2	–	3	

Year	Event	+	–	=	Place
1970	“Match of the Century”, Belgrade (board 2)	–	2	2	
1970	International Tournament, Rovinj/Zagreb	5	1	11	6
1970	European Team Championship, Kapfenberg (board 1)	1	–	5	
1970	19th Olympiad, Siegen (board 2)	6	–	8	
1970	International Tournament, Vinkovci	4	1	10	6-9
1971	International Tournament, Wijk aan Zee	4	–	11	2-5
1971	Candidates Quarter-Final Match v. Huebner, Seville	1	–	6	
1971	Candidates Semi-Final Match v. Korchnoi, Moscow	1	–	9	
1971	Candidates Final Match v. Fischer, Buenos Aires	1	5	3	
1971	Alekhine Memorial, Moscow	4	1	12	4-5
1972	5th USSR Nations Spartakiad, Moscow (board 1)	2	–	5	
1972	International Tournament, Sarajevo	6	–	9	2
1972	USSR–Yugoslavia Match, Ohrid (board 1)	2	–	2	
1972	20th Olympiad, Skopje (board 1)	6	1	9	
1972	International Tournament, San Antonio	6	–	9	1-3
1973	International Tournament, Las Palmas	4	–	11	1-2
1973	USSR Teams Match-Tournament, Moscow (board 2)	1	–	3	
1973	European Team Championship, Bath, (board 2)	2	–	5	1-2
1973	International Tournament, Amsterdam	6	1	8	
1973	41st USSR Championship (Top League), Moscow	1	–	13	2-6
1973	USSR–Yugoslavia Match, Tbilisi (board 1)	1	1	2	
1974	Candidates Quarter-Final match v. Portisch, Palma de Mallorca	3	2	8	
1974	Candidates Semi-Final match v. Korchnoi, Odessa	1	3	1	
1974	21st Olympiad, Nice (board 4)	12	–	3	1
1974	USSR Cup, Moscow (board 1)	2	1	6	
1974	International Tournament, Manila	5	–	9	2
1975	International Tournament, Las Palmas	4	–	10	7
1975	6th USSR Nations Spartakiad, Riga (board 1)	2	2	4	
1975	International Tournament, Milan:				
	All-Play-All	2	–	9	
	Semi-Final Match v. Karpov	–	–	4	
	3rd Place Play-off v. Ljubojević	1	1	4	3-4
1975	Alekhine Memorial, Moscow	4	1	10	6-7
1975	43rd USSR Championship (Top League), Yerevan	6	1	8	1
1976	International Tournament, Lone Pine	4	–	3	1
1976	USSR Cup (Top League), Tbilisi	1	–	6	
1976	Interzonal Tournament, Biel	6	1	12	2-4
1976	3-Way Match-Tournament (Petrosian, Portisch, Tal), Varese	1	–	7	1

Year	Event	+	–	=	Place
1976	44th USSR Championship (Top League), Moscow	6	2	9	3-4
1977	Candidates Quarter-Final match v. Korchnoi, Ciocco	1	2	9	
1977	European Team Championship, Moscow (board 2)	1	–	5	
1977	Chigorin Memorial, Sochi	3	–	12	5-9
1977	45th USSR Championship (Top League), Leningrad	4	1	10	3-4
1977-8	International Tournament, Hastings	5	–	9	2-3
1978	International Tournament, Lone Pine	3	–	6	6-10
1978	USSR Cup (Top League), Ordzhonikidze	2	1	4	
1978	International Tournament, Vilnius	6	1	8	2
1978	3 Capitals Match-Tournament (Moscow/Belgrade/Prague), Moscow (board 1)	1	–	1	
1978	23rd Olympiad, Buenos Aires (board 2)	3	–	6	
1979	Keres Memorial, Tallinn	8	–	8	1
1979	USSR–Yugoslavia Match, Teslic (board 2)	1	–	3	
1979	7th USSR Nations Spartakiad, Moscow (board 1)	2	1	5	
1979	Interzonal Tournament, Rio de Janeiro	6	–	11	1-3
1979	International Tournament, Buenos Aires	2	3	8	9-10
1979	International Tournament, Banja Luka	3	–	12	4
1980	European Team Championship, Skara (board 3)	–	–	5	
1980	Candidates Quarter-Final match v. Korchnoi, Velden	–	2	7	
1980	USSR Cup (Top League), Rostov-on-Don	–	–	7	
1980	International Tournament, Las Palmas	6	–	5	1-3
1980	International Tournament, Vrbas	2	–	9	2-4
1980	International Tournament, Bar	7	–	6	1
1981	4 USSR Teams Match-Tournament, Moscow (board 4)	1	1	4	
1981	International Tournament, Moscow	1	2	10	9-10
1981	USSR Team Championship, Moscow, (board 1)	2	1	6	3-4
1981	International Tournament, Oberwart	6	–	3	2-6
1981	International Tournament, Vrsac	6	1	8	3
1981	International Tournament, Tilburg	3	–	8	2
1982	Interzonal Tournament, Las Palmas	3	1	9	4-5
1982	USSR Cup, Kislovodsk (board 1)	2	1	4	2-4
1982	International Tournament, Bugojno	2	1	10	6-8
1982	International Tournament, Tilburg	3	2	6	5-6
1983	Keres Memorial, Tallinn	3	–	12	3-5
1983	50th USSR Championship, Moscow	2	2	11	6-9
1983	8th USSR Nations Spartakiad, Moscow (board 2)	2	–	7	
1983	European Team Championship, Plovdiv (board 3)	2	–	3	
1983	International Tournament, Niksic	1	3	10	11-12

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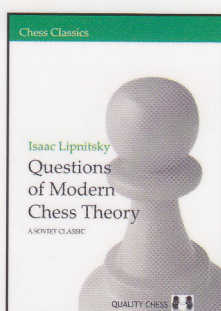
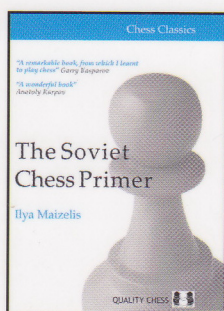
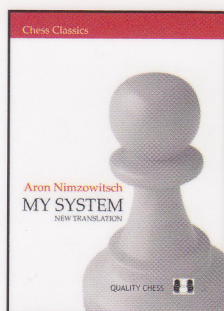
Tigran Petrosian

Tigran Petrosian is a titan of chess history. All agree he was a genius of strategy, defence and sacrifice, but didn't he take too many draws? Possibly so, but when Petrosian selected and annotated his best games, that flaw disappeared, leaving only brilliance and profound chess understanding. As Garry Kasparov said: *"My games with the 9th World Champion broadened my understanding of chess. Had it not been for these two defeats, I would possibly not have reached the top in chess."*

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